

Crown of Thorns



STORY & ART BY
Yoko Kamio 2



Crown of Thorns

2

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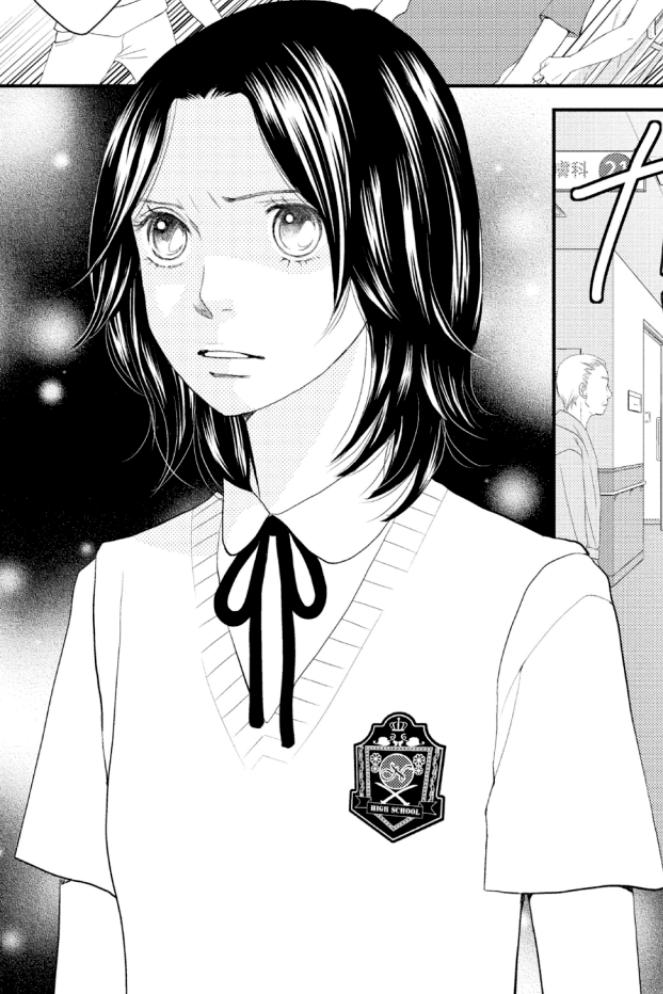
High school student Nobara Fukami has seen strange things since she was a child, but it's a gift that has brought her a life of isolation. She nearly died when she was young, but her grandfather made a deal with a demon to save her. However, the deal keeping her alive is set to expire when she turns 18.

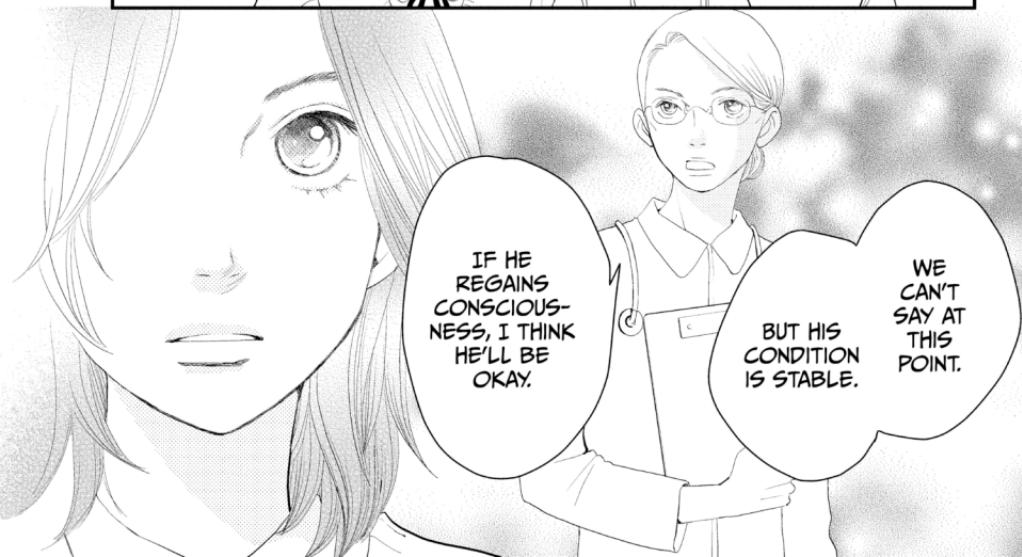
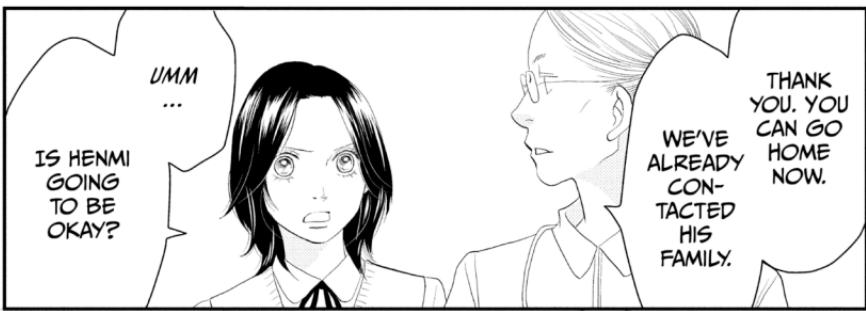
Just before her 16th birthday, Nobara is visited by a demon named Lucio. He demands Nobara filter negative human emotions through her own body to make the special orbs on which demons feed. While fulfilling this duty, Nobara finally finds someone who seems to truly understand her—the demon she serves. However, a demon of ruination named Lee also visits Nobara, telling her that Lucio is a "reject" and that she should ask him for his real name.

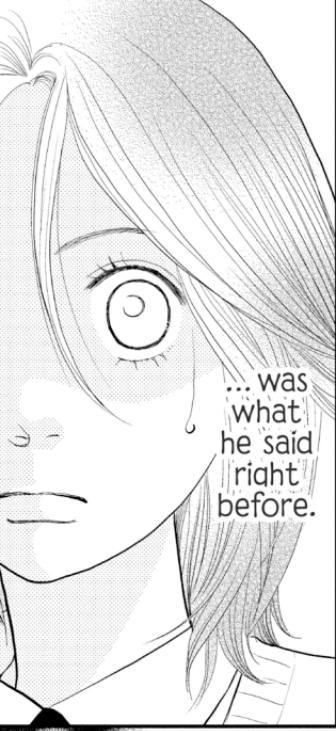
Meanwhile, after boasting, "I have a demon too," Nobara's classmate Henmi suddenly collapses in front of her...







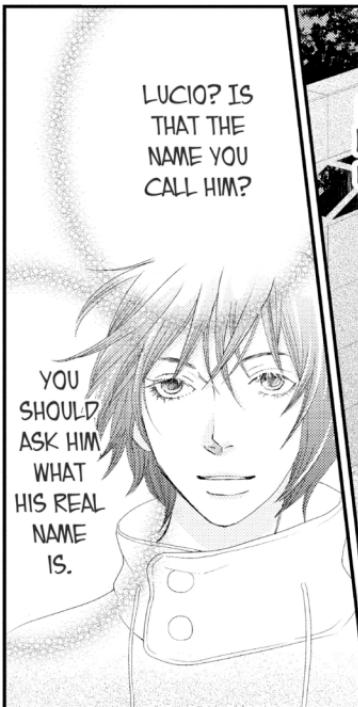
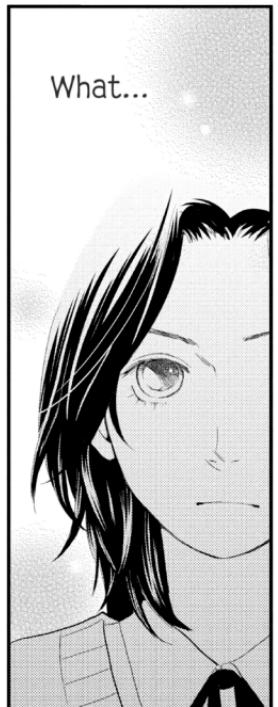






REALITY'S
JUST LIKE
THE MOVIES.

THE WORST
VILLAINS
ALWAYS
DISGUISE
THEMSELVES
AS VIRTUOUS
MEN.



There's nothing good on TV anymore! Nothing but dumb specials!

It's true that he can be kind of pathetic
...

More fussy than scary, really.

And he's not very impressive for a demon.

And a total couch potato.

...did Lee mean by that?

HE'S A REJECT THROUGH AND THROUGH.

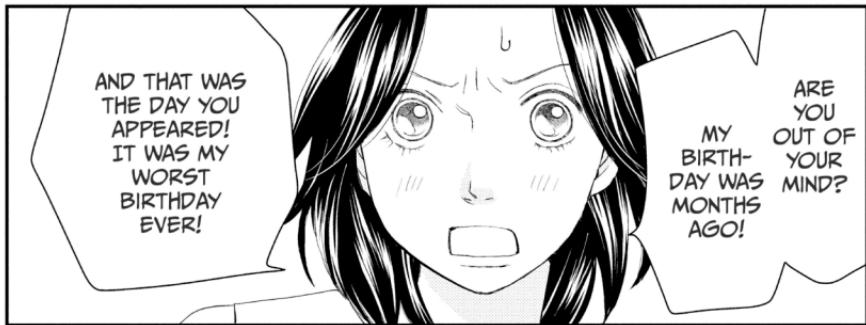
WHAT?!

IF THAT'S WHAT HE MEANT BY "REJECT," THAT'S FAIR...

ACK!

WHO'S A REJECT NOW?





HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!

THANKS FOR
HAVING US
OVER!

BUT YOU
CALLED ME
THORNY
ROSE THIS
MORNING.

LET'S BE
FRIENDS
FOREVER.

ALL
RIGHT
EVERY-
ONE!

I CAN'T
BELIEVE
IT'S YOUR
BIRTHDAY!

WHAT
?!

HUH
?
IT WAS
MONTHS
AGO!

HAPPY
BIRTH-
DAY!

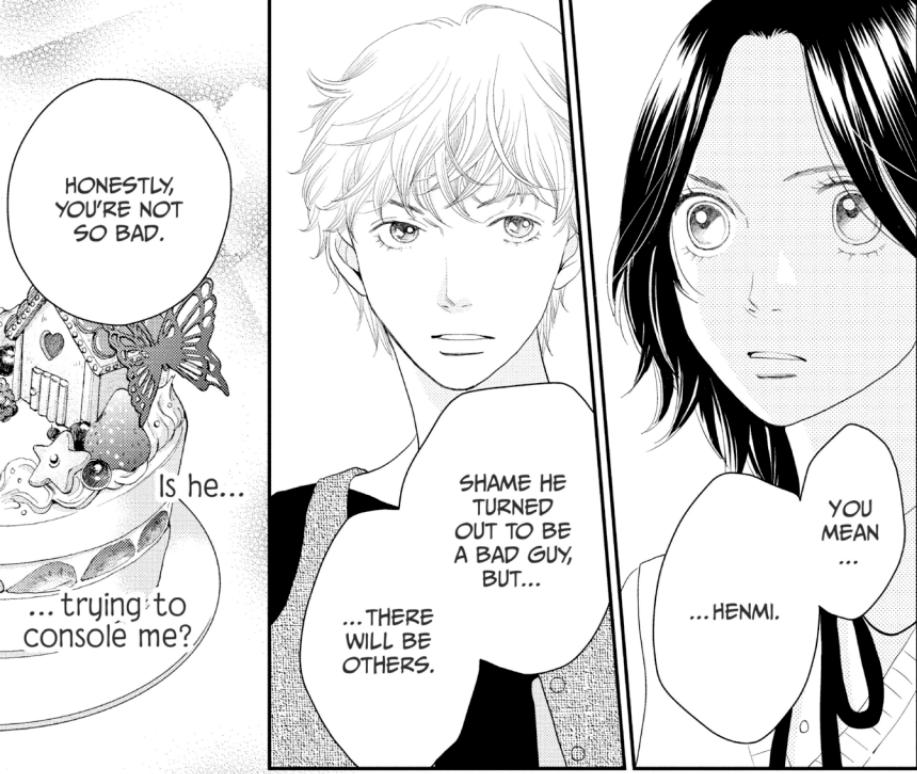
YAY











Never
mind that.

WHAT
IS IT?

This
feeling.

What is
this?

Bubbling
up from
inside of
me...

It's so
weird...

DIG
IN.

SHUNK



...
having some-
one
care
about
me.



I COULDN'T
MAKE OUT HIS
REAL NAME.

BUT HE
SAID TO
CALL HIM
"LEE."







AND
"LUCIO" IS
FINE WITH
ME!



BETTER
THAN SOME
WEIRD NAME
I CAN'T EVEN
PRONOUNCE.

Like
I care
about
anything
that creep
says.

LUCIO IS
GOOD.







Greetings.



I'm
Yoko
Kamio.

Thank you for
Buying Crown of
Thorns volume
2.

This is my first
ever fantasy
manga!

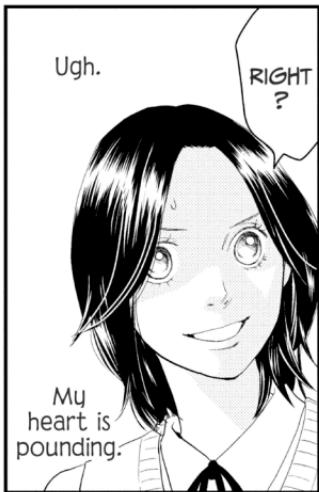
I'm so glad I was
able to fulfill my
dream of writing
fantasy.

And I'm honored
that you read it
till the end.

They asked
me to write
a little bonus
manga at the
end of this
volume.

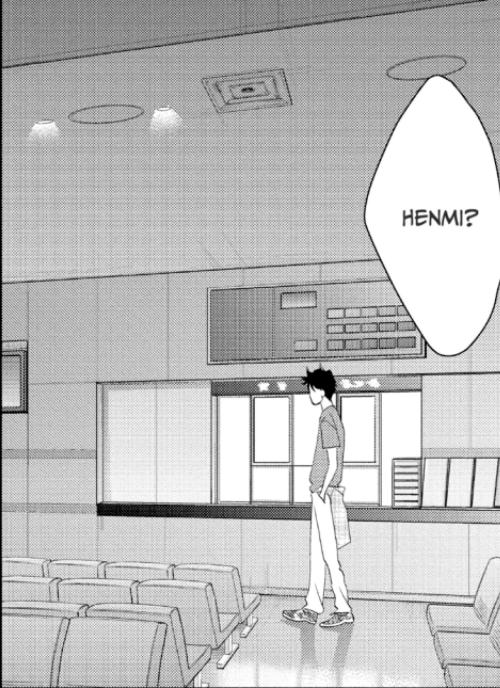

I hope you'll
enjoy it!



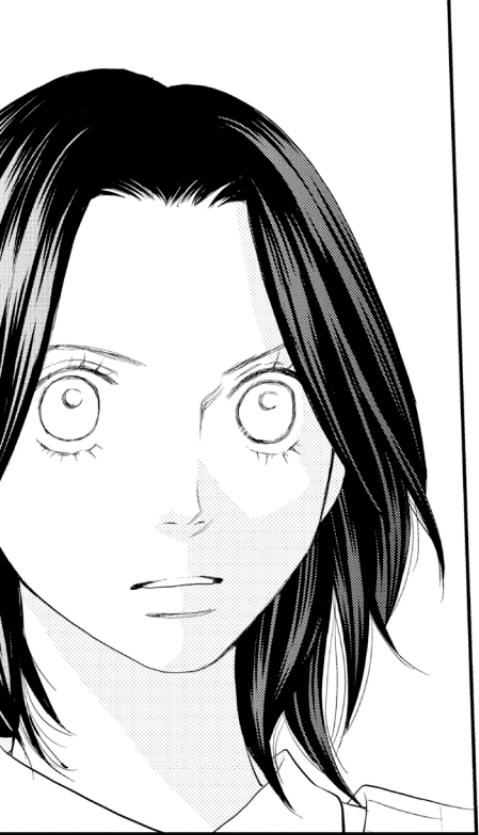


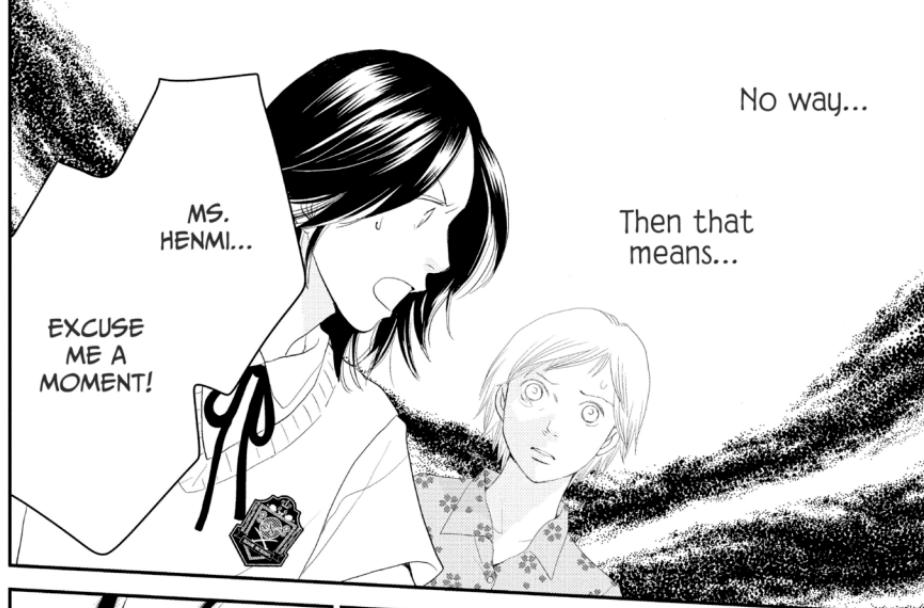
Sign: Shuei Hospital





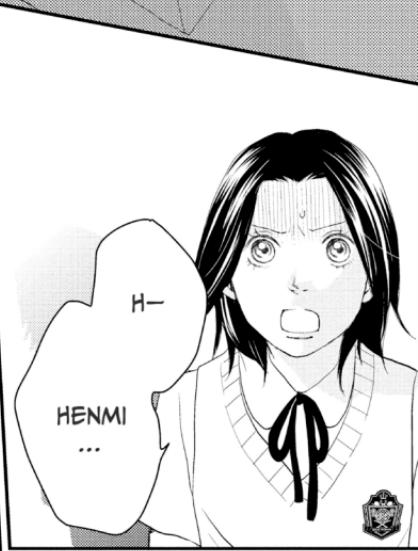


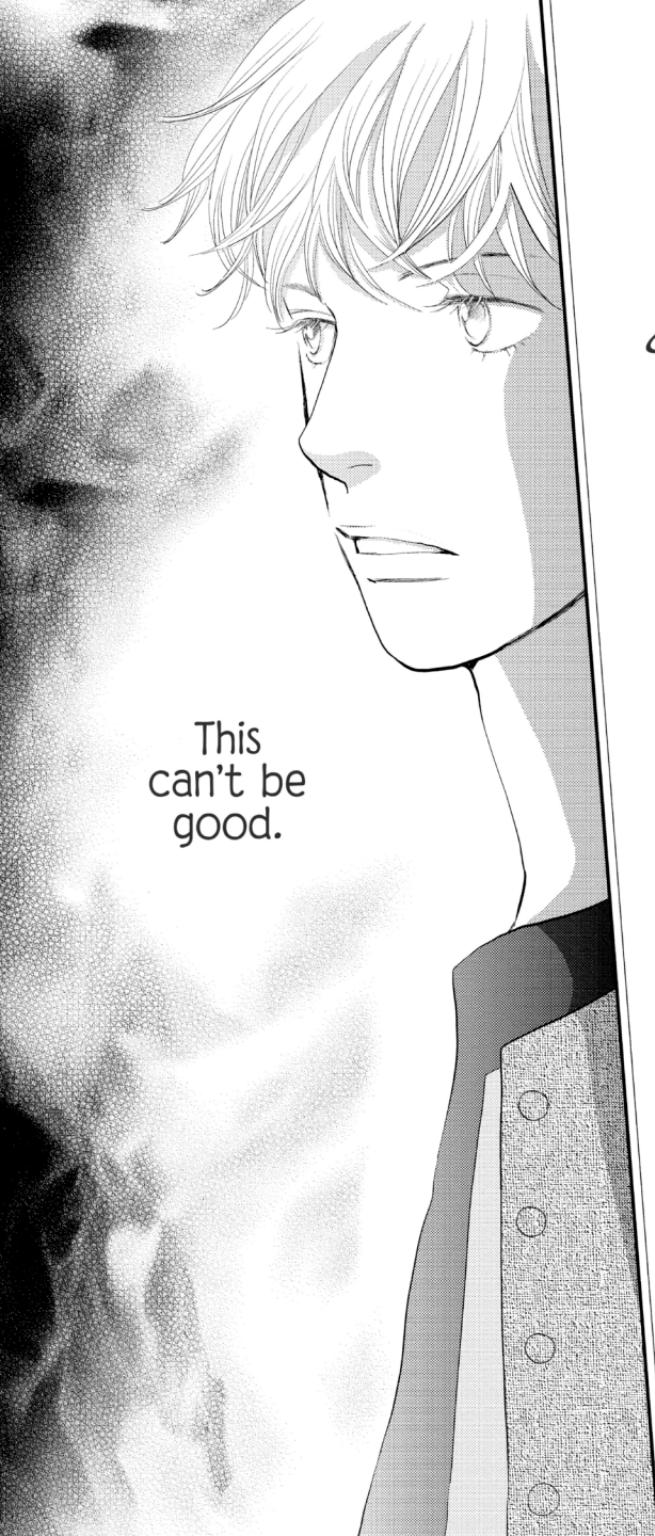




HENMI
!







*WHEN I GAINED
CONSCIOUSNESS*

...



This
can't be
good.

*...I WAS JUST
FLOATING IN
DARKNESS.*





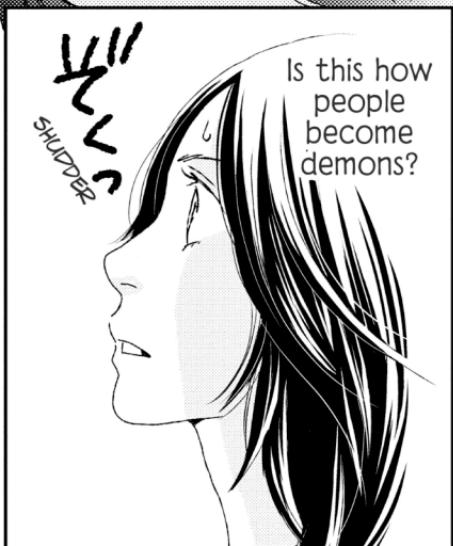
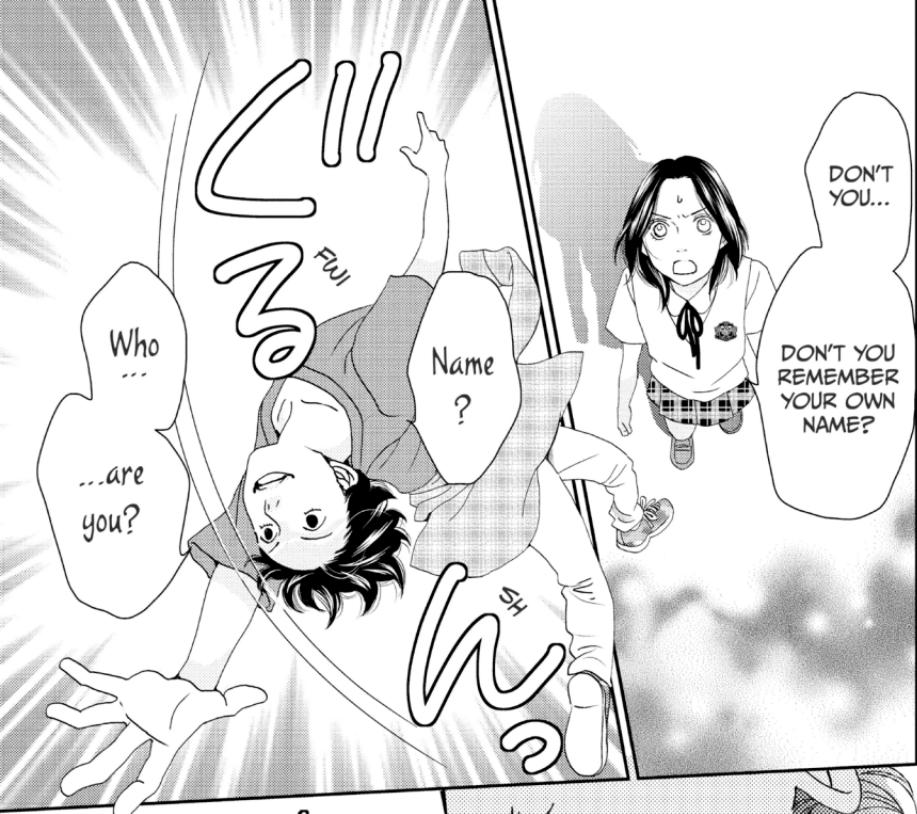


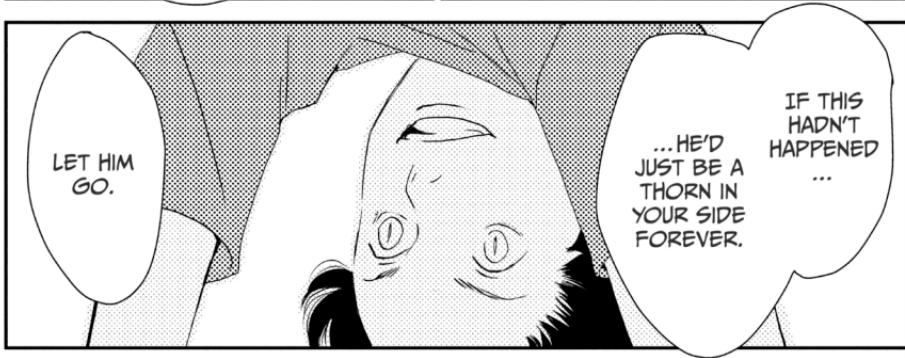
WHO
...?

YOU'RE
HENMI!

Who...

...is
Henmi?





Lucio...



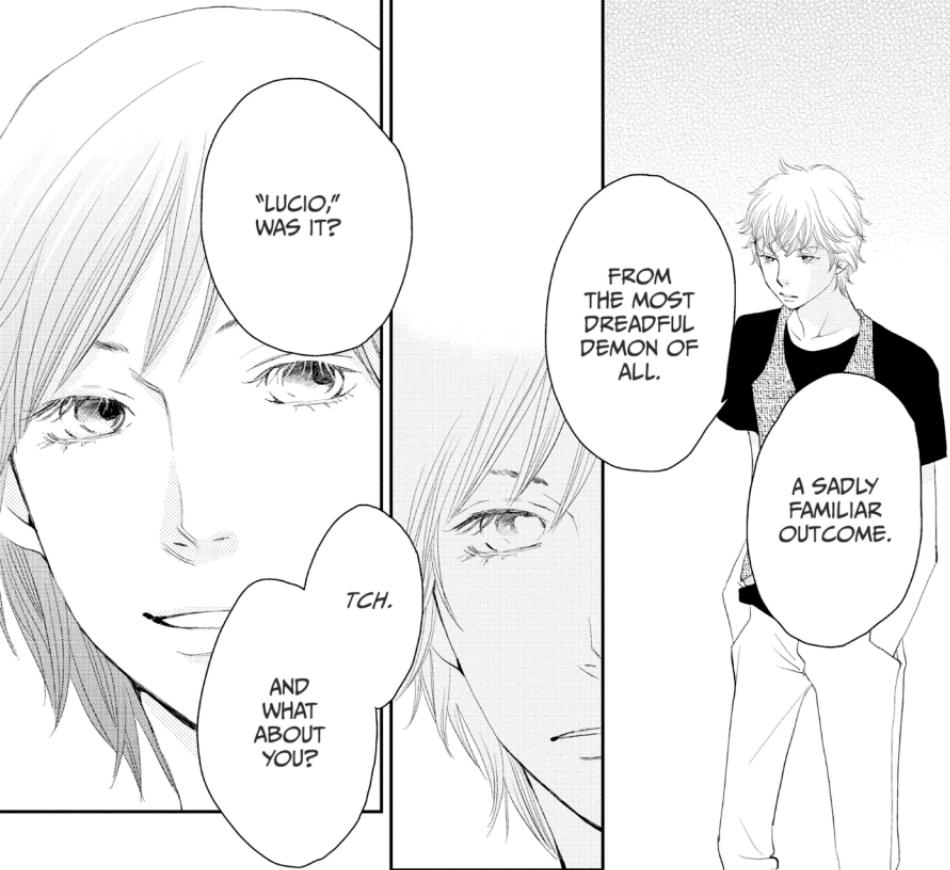
Is this...

...what
happened to
you?

THIS IS WHAT
BECOMES
OF HUMANS
WHO SERVE
DEMONS.









REJECT.

NO
MATTER
HOW
WELL YOU
TWO GET
ALONG

...THIS IS
HOW THINGS
ALWAYS END,
BETWEEN
HUMANS AND
DEMONS.

...TO
BRING
HENMI
BACK!

TELL ME
HOW...

WAIT!

POOR,
NAMELESS
LUCIO.

LUCIO
RIGHT
THERE IS
YOUR HINT.

That's right.
Henmi's
forgotten his
name too.

"Name-
less
..."

GET
DOWN
HERE!

IT'S
POSSIBLE.

CAN
DEMONS
RETURN
IF THEY
REMEMBER
THEIR
NAMES?

NAMES
...!

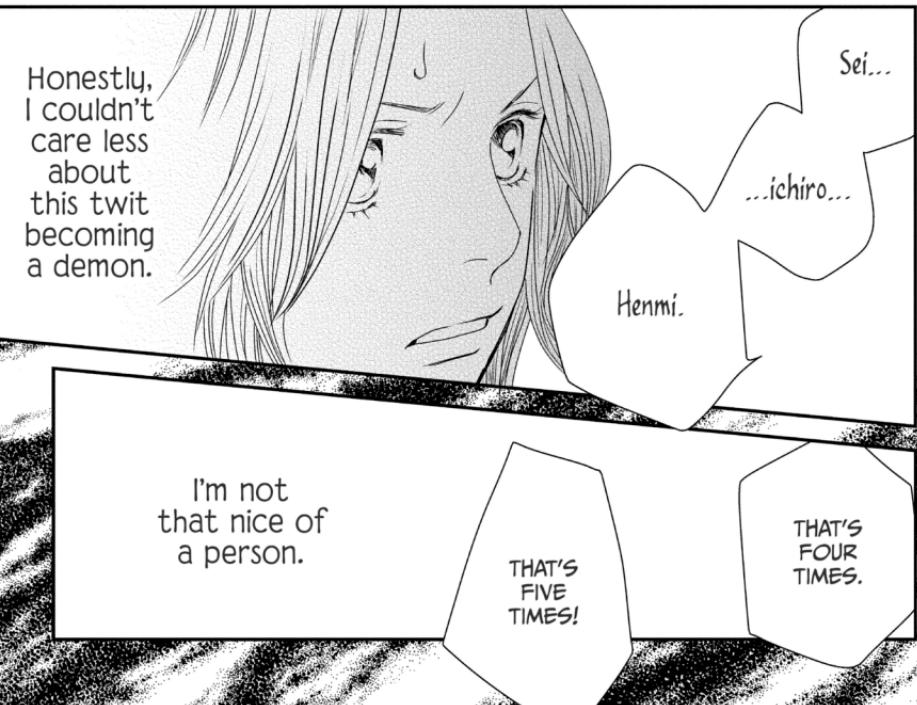
I KNOW
YOU WANT
THIS, HENMI!!

HEH HEH HEH
Henmi! Come down!
MUTTER MUTTER

COME
AND GET
IT!

OH!









And if this
works for
Henmi...





WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING
HERE?

FU...
FUKAMI,
RIGHT
?

WHAT
?

SEIICHIRO'S
REGAINED
CONSCIOUS-
NESS!

NOBARA WAS
WITH YOU
WHEN YOU
COLLAPSED.

RIGHT,
FUKAMI?

THERE'S
NO WAY.

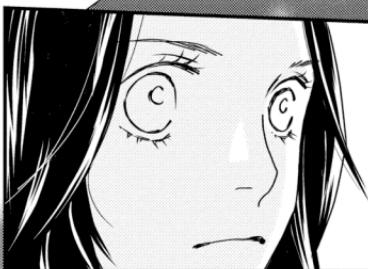
WHAT?

WHY
WOULD
SHE AND
I...?



I MEAN,
I'VE
SEEN HER
AROUND
A FEW
TIMES...

I HAVEN'T
SAID A WORD
TO HER
SINCE GRADE
SCHOOL!



IT WAS
LIKE HE'S A
DIFFERENT
PERSON.
ALL THE
MALICE
IN HIM IS
GONE.

ONE
OF HIS
RUSES?

中央道

CHUO EXPWY

霜の関
Shimonoseki

8

先駆
Seng

NOW I
CAN'T EVEN
GET BACK
AT HIM FOR
IT ALL!

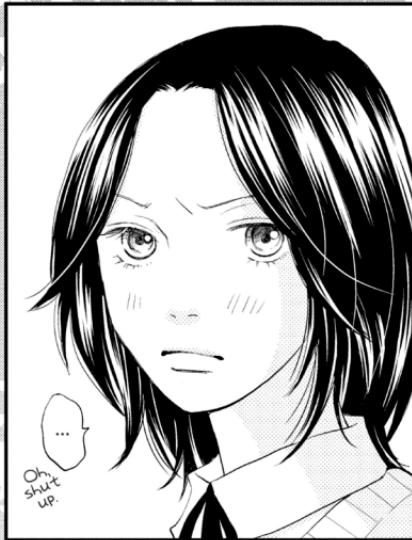
AFTER
ALL THE
HORRIBLE
THINGS HE
DID...

ARGH!

I DON'T
THINK
SO.

I
GUESS
SO.
HE'S
FORGOTTEN
ALL THE
THINGS HE
DID TO ME?

SO...



SO I GUESS
EVERYTHING
CAN GET BACK
TO NORMAL.

I DON'T
THINK SO.

WELL ...

IF
THERE'S
ONE
BRIGHT
SIDE TO
ALL THIS
...

...AT LEAST
HE'S
PROBABLY
DONE
TORMENTING
ME NOW.

SPEAKING OF
WHICH, HERE
YOU GO!

AS
NORMAL
AS IT
EVER IS.

I'LL GET
MORE,
THOUGH.

I COULDN'T
HAVE LURED
HIM DOWN
WITHOUT IT.

IT'S A
GOOD
THING
I HAD
THIS.



I CAN
MAKE THE
ORBS
WITHOUT IT
AFFECTING
ME.

YOU
SAID SO
YOURSELF,
REMEMBER
?

SO I'LL KEEP
ON BANGING
THEM OUT
FOR YOU!

THIS IS BECAUSE
OF WHAT LEE SAID,
RIGHT? ABOUT
HOW THINGS END
BETWEEN HUMANS
AND DEMONS?

Is
Lucio...

...trying to leave me?

I GOTTA
DO THIS TO
STAY ALIVE,
REMEMBER?

WHO
DOES
IT HELP
FOR ME
TO QUIT?

What
am I
doing?

I MEAN,
COULD YOU
BE MORE
SELFISH?!

IF
THAT'S
WHAT
YOU
WANT
...
...YOU
SHOULD
HAVE JUST
LET ME DIE
TO BEGIN
WITH!

Why
am I
saying
it like
this?



What am I
supposed to
say to stop
him?



I've never
been this close
to anyone
before...

WHAT'S
WRONG
WITH
YOU!

YOU
STUPID
DEMON!



WHO DO
YOU THINK
YOU'RE
TALKING
TO?

READING
HUMAN
MINDS IS
WHAT I
DO.







IT LOOKS
LIKE I MIGHT
HAVE BEEN
HUMAN ONCE
TOO.

At
night
...

... white
smoke
seeps out
of the
smoke-
stacks...

Just
like the
whisper

... that
slips like a
sigh from
Lucio's
lips.

I WANT
TO KNOW
MY OWN
NAME.



CROWN
OF
THORNS

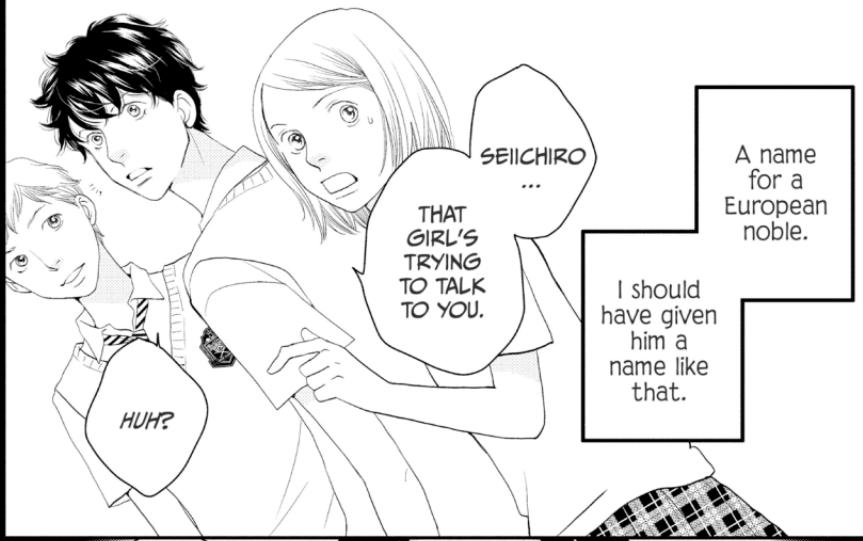
case
9

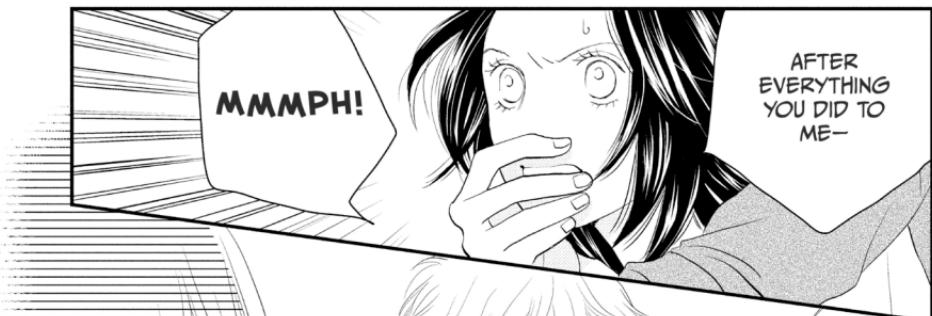


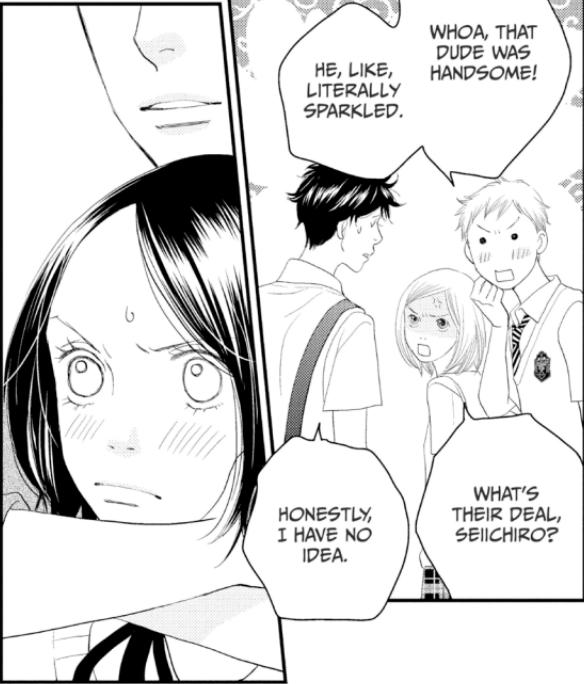
Maybe I
should have
come up
with a better
name.

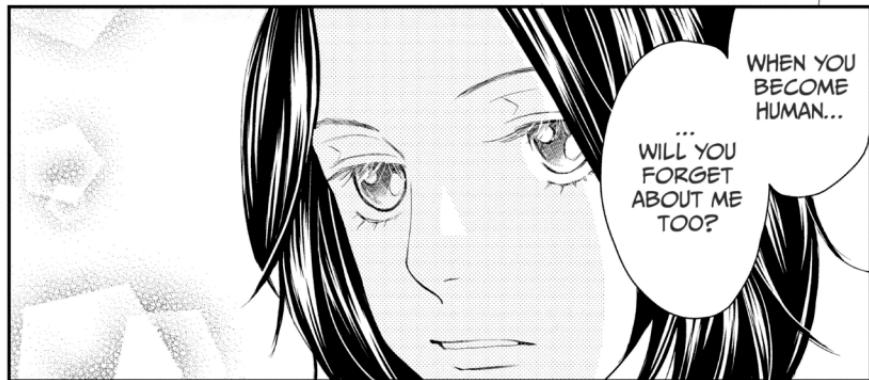
Like
Orlando.
Or
George.

Some-
thing
cooler
than
Lucio.

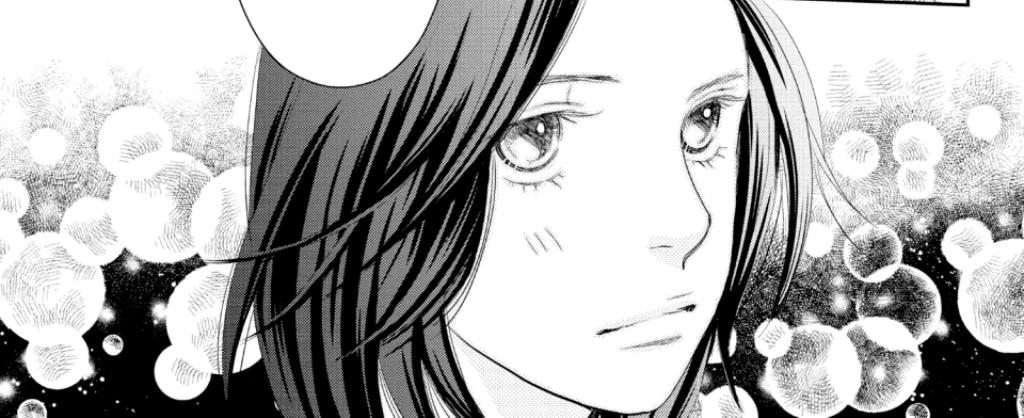






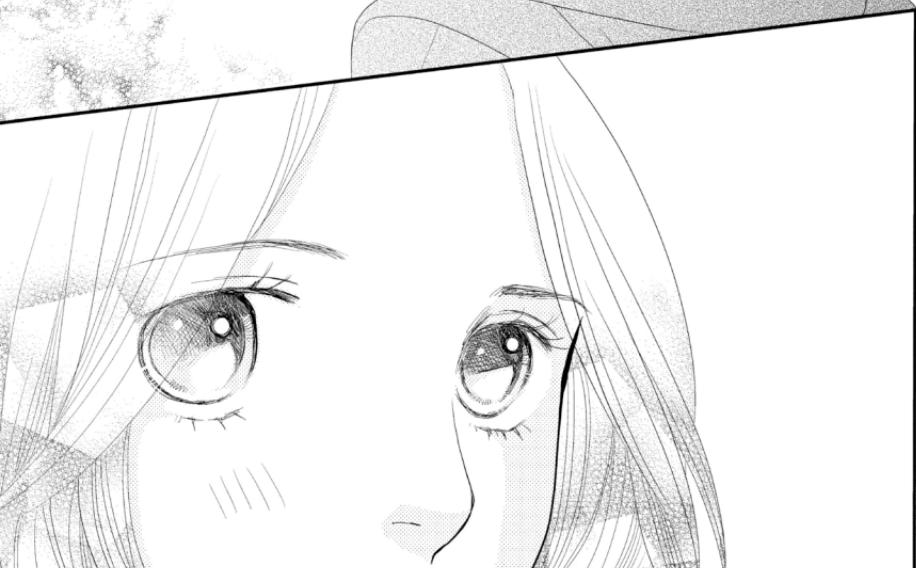






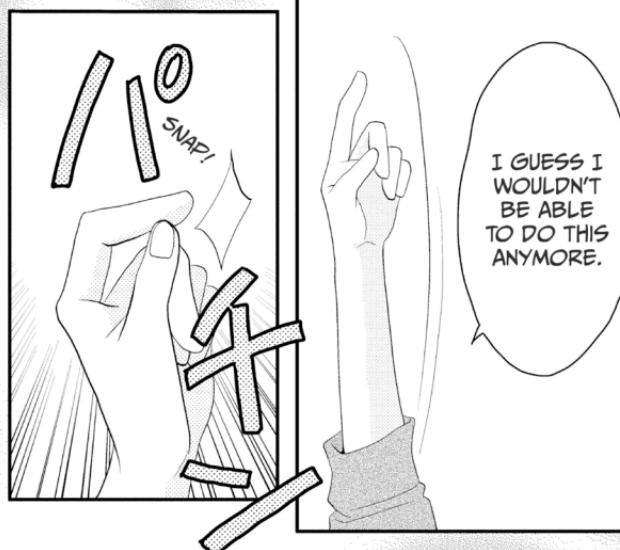


...I THINK YOU
AND I WOULD
REALLY GET
ALONG.

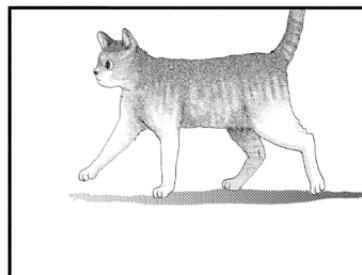


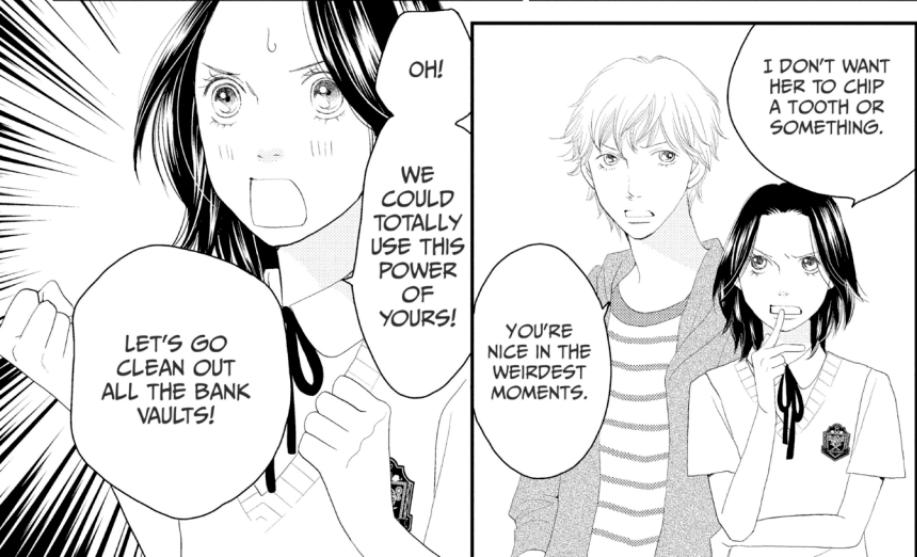
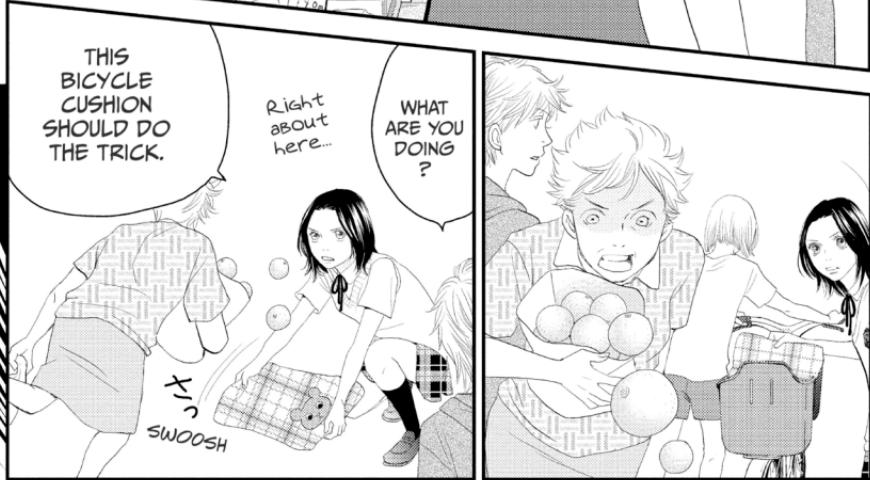
I feel so
happy...

I...
GUESS
SO.

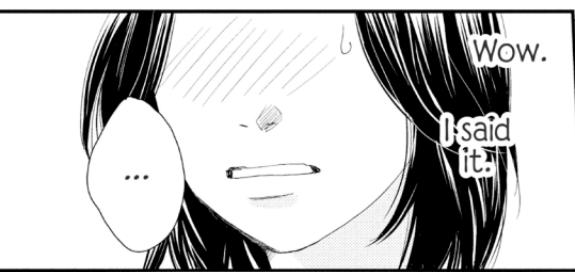


And at
the same
time, so
worried.









IF YOU
BECOME
HUMAN
AGAIN...

...
MAYBE YOU'LL
FORGET ALL
THIS, THE WAY
HENMI DID...

BUT I'LL STILL
REMEMBER.

gp

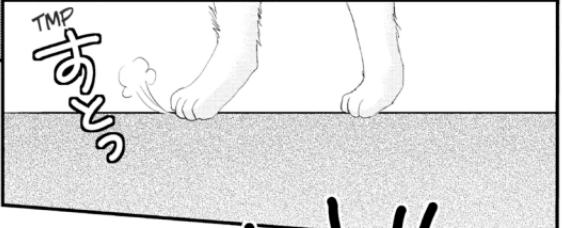


LET'S
RESTORE
TIME,
FIRST.

WELL
...

THE
PROBLEM
IS...

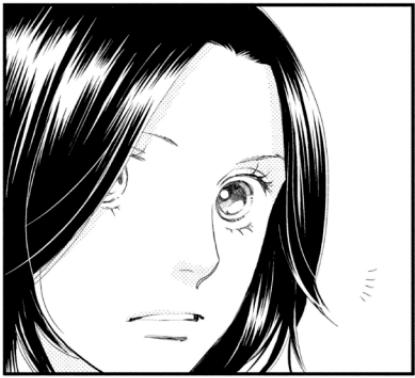
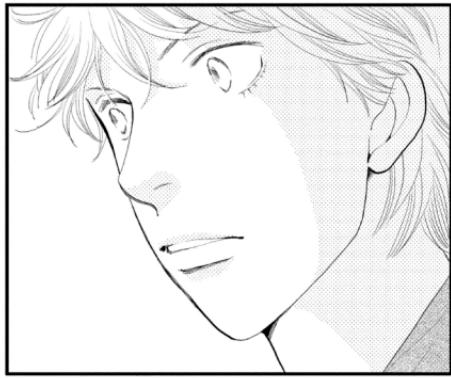
HOW ARE WE
SUPPOSED
TO FIND YOUR
NAME?

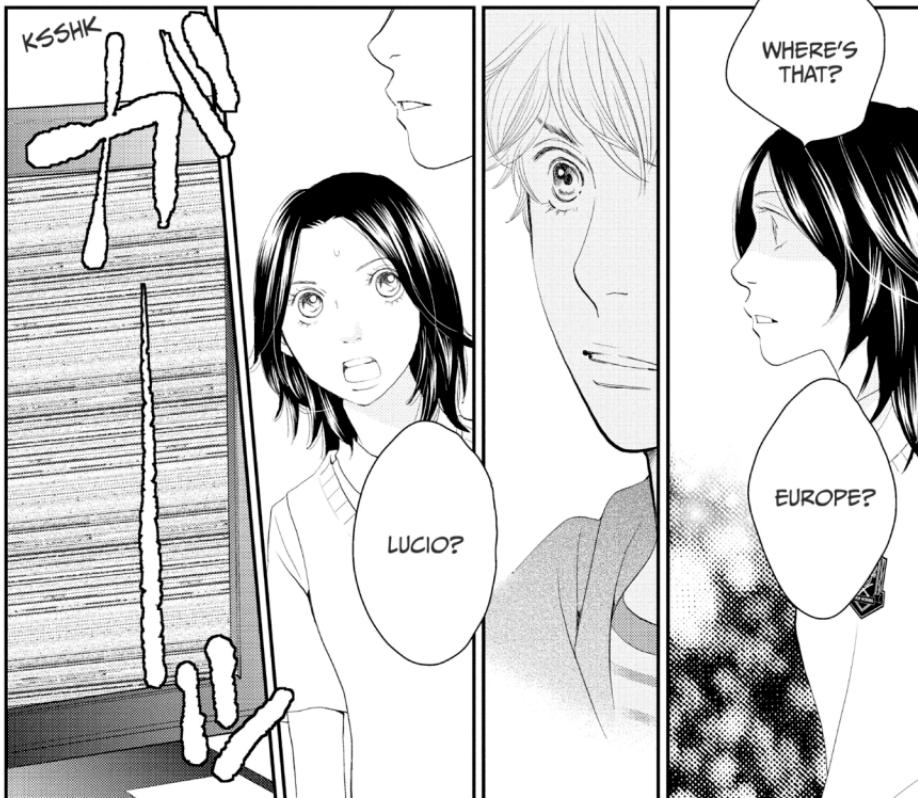


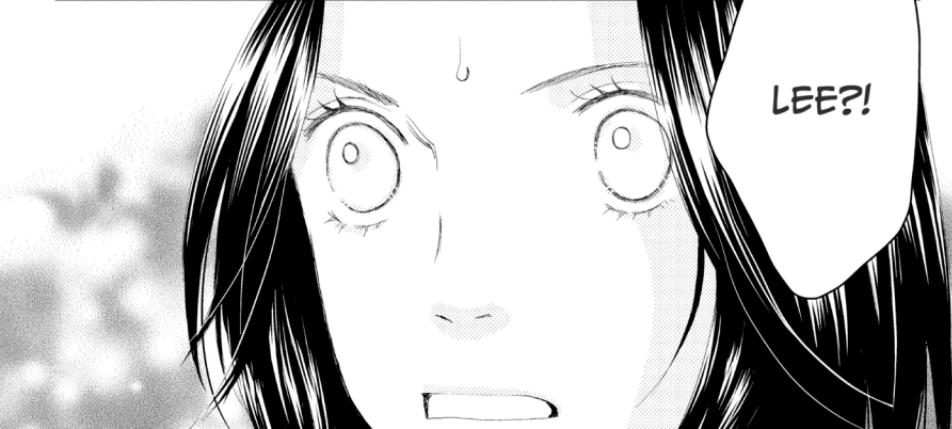




And he
hasn't
responded
at all.



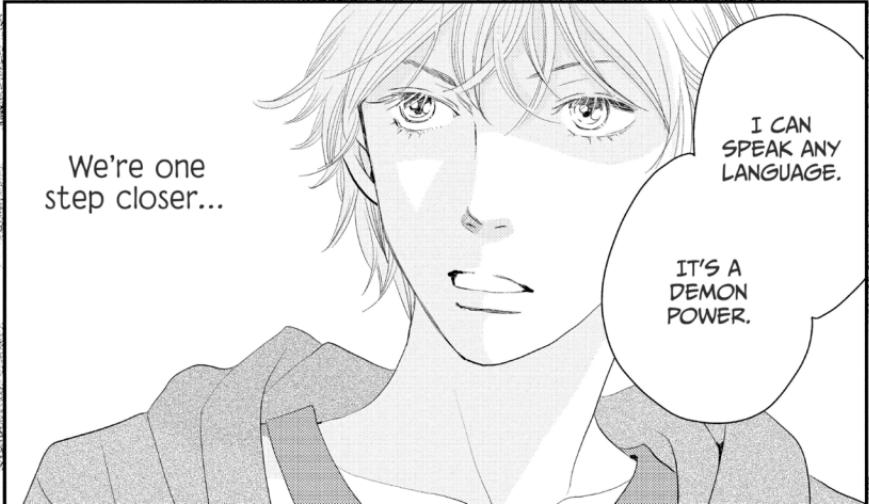
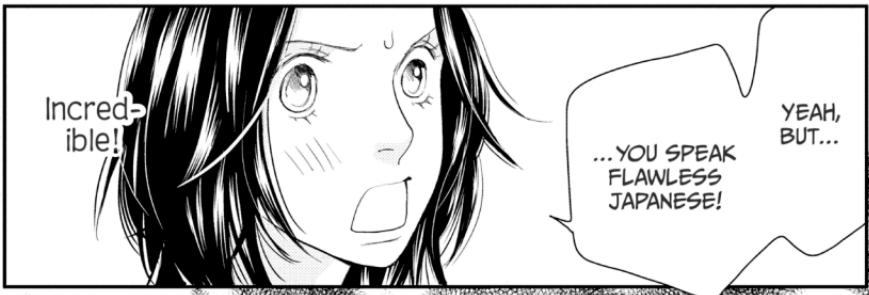






Is that
it?





Will I get
to meet
a human
Lucio?

I'M
GONNA
...

...GO TO THE
SCHOOL'S
COMPUTER
LAB AND
DO SOME
RESEARCH.

My
heart is
pounding.

I KNEW I
SHOULD HAVE
GOTTEN A
COMPUTER
FOR HOME...

Oh! I'd
better
start
getting
some
money
together
!

What will
we do
about the
language
issue?

OH,
WELL.

I'LL CATCH
YOU LATER.

I've never
left the
country
before.

I hope it'll
be okay.

IMPRESSIVE.

HUMANS
ARE SO
FASCINATING.

HOW
QUICKLY
THEY
CHANGE!







Nobara.

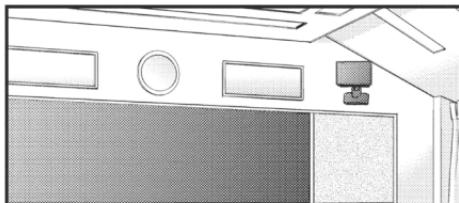
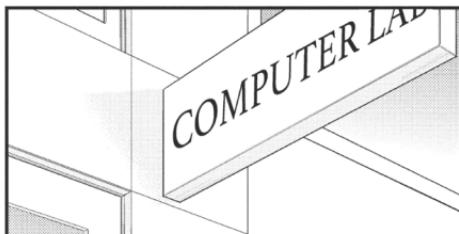
I can still
hear that
voice...

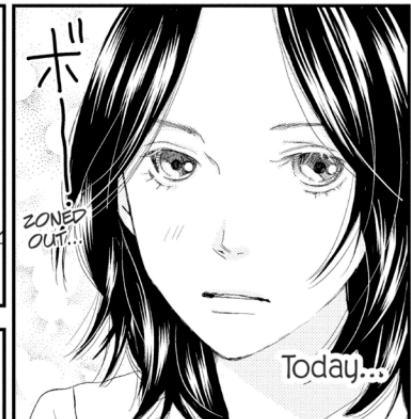
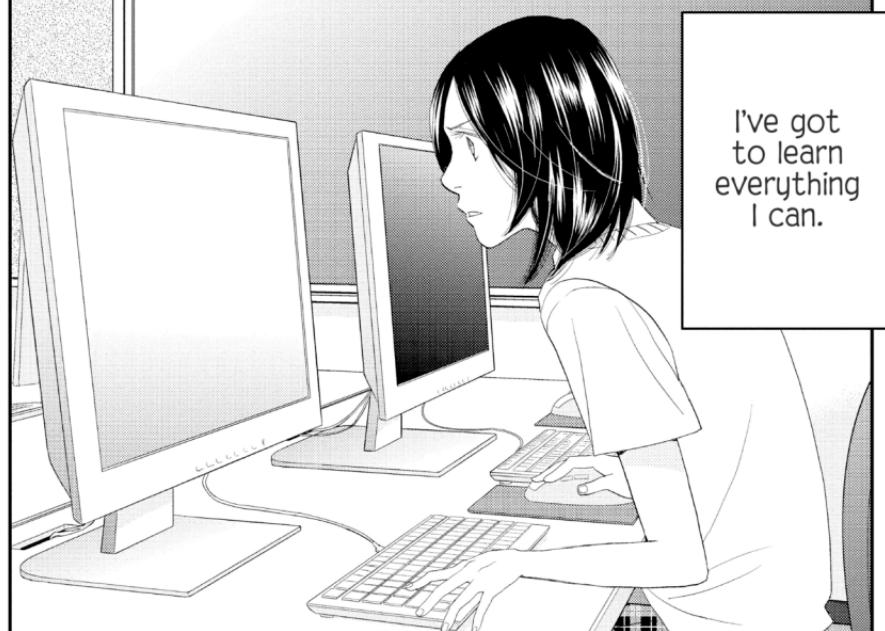
But...





How I yearn for the day that we can finally meet.







Lucio might
be asleep, all
alone.

I should be
the one to go
to him.



Our
last day
together
...

... was
fast
approach-
ing.

And I was
the only
one who
didn't seem
to know it.



元氣

CROWN
OF
THORNS

case
IO

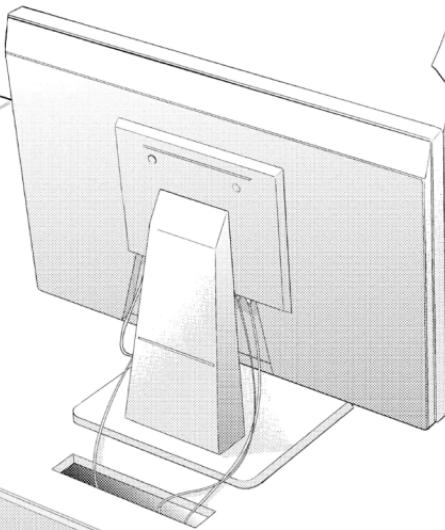




MAYBE
YOU'LL
FIND WHAT
YOU SEEK
THERE.

GOTLAND
ISLAND IN
SWEDEN.

That might
be where
the human
Lucio is.





Pretty funny that it would be for a demon.

I've never worked so hard for someone else before.

WHAT NOW ...?

... now ...

...I kind of get it.

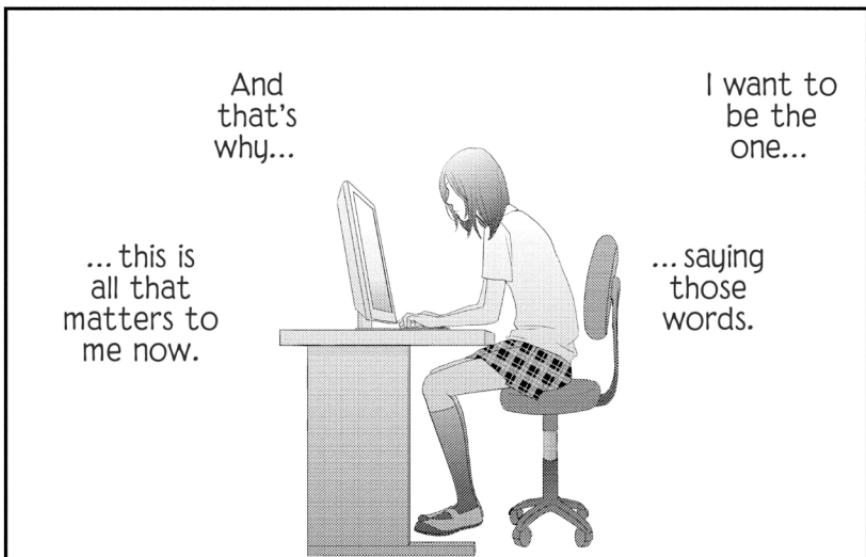
I'd see them doing anything and everything for some guy...

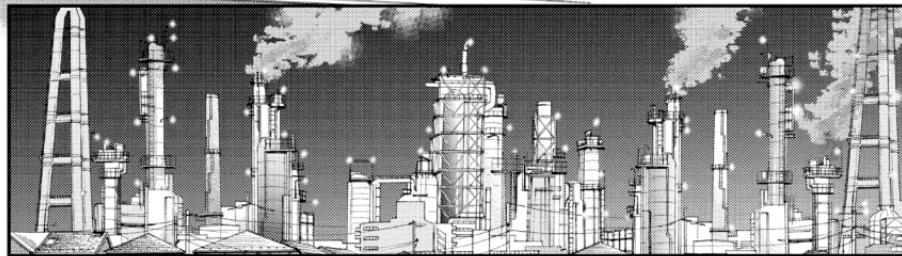
Before this...

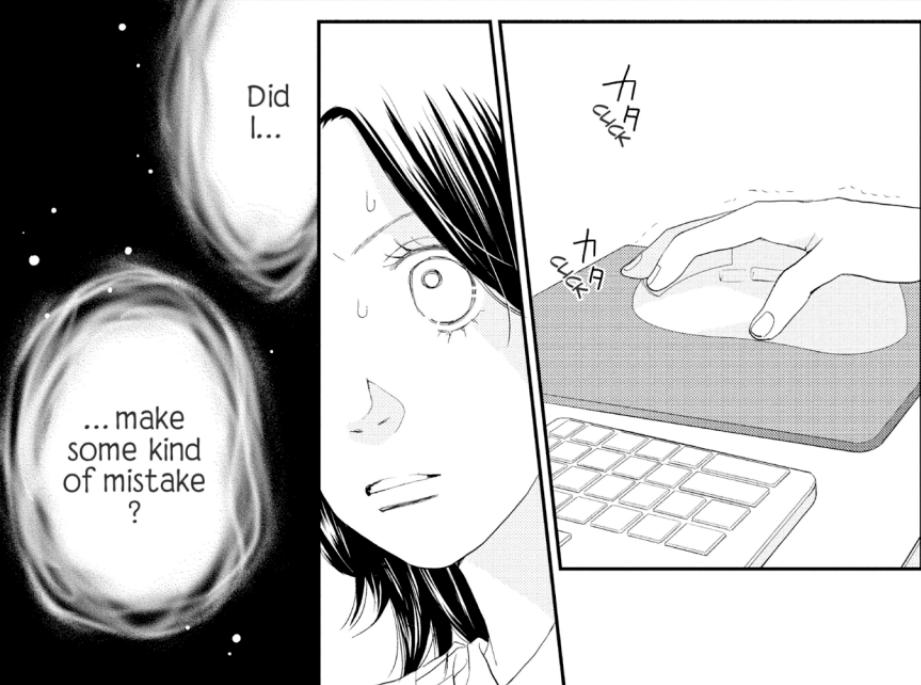
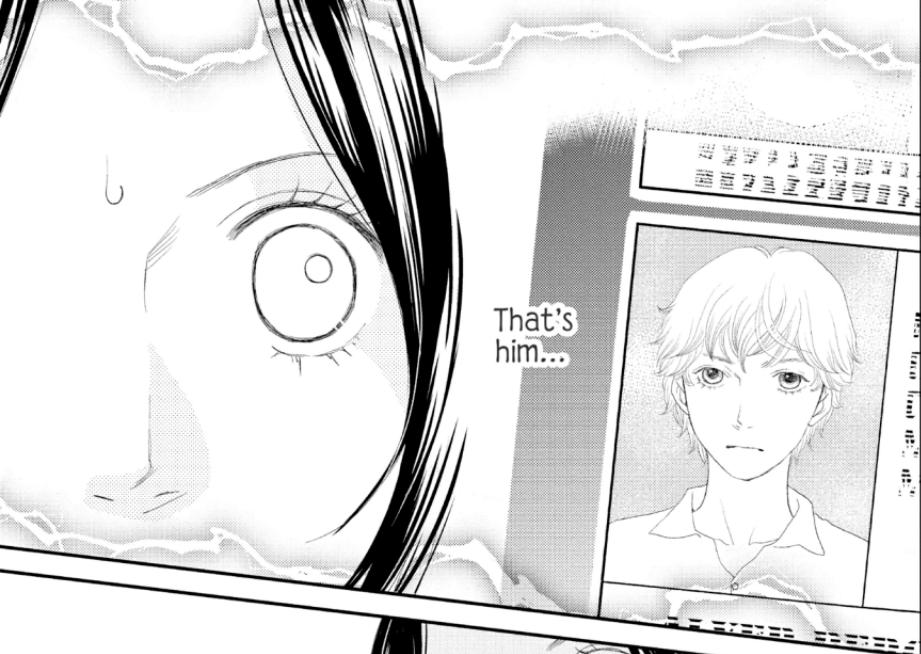
... I never really understood what the other girls were talking about.

... and I'd only ever make fun of them for it.

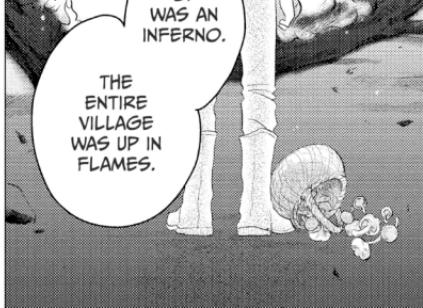
But...

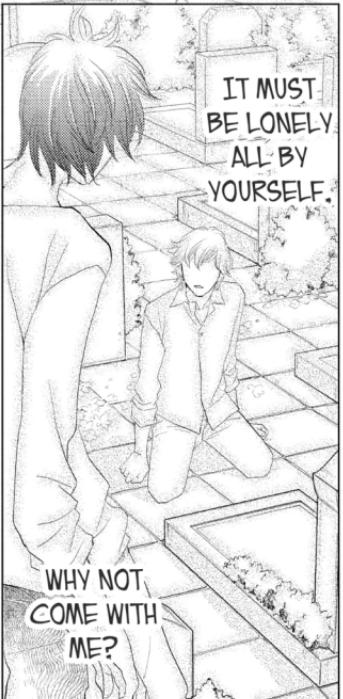












... was Lee.

AND SO...

WHEN I
GAINED
CONSCIOUS-
NESS...



...I WAS
JUST
FLOATING IN
DARKNESS.



...THANKS
TO HIM...

...I
BECAME
A DEMON.





WHY...

...DOES IT
HAVE TO
BE LIKE
THIS?

THIS
DOESN'T
NEED TO
END!

SHOW
ME THE
MONITOR.

I'M
GOING
TO
LOOK.

YOU
DON'T
NEED TO
LOOK!

NO!



THERE'S
NOTHING
TO
RETURN
TO.

Ja.
AH.

Mitt namn är Alver.
SO MY NAME IS ALVER.

YOU
DON'T
HAVE...

...A
BODY!



Alver Bergman
1910~

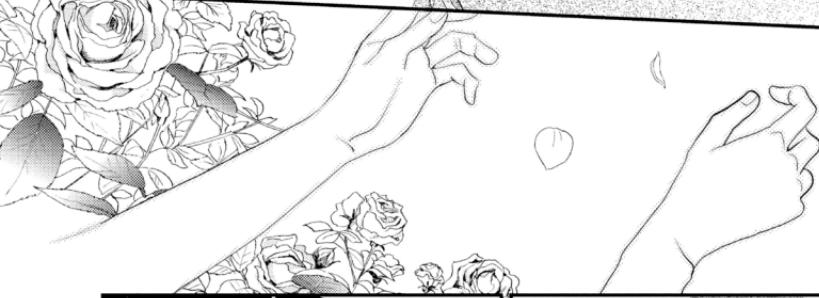
Date: Missing:
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Illustration by Satoru Yamamoto. Story by Junji Ito. English translation by David Lapham. © 2010 Junji Ito. All rights reserved.

**Alver Bergman
1910~**









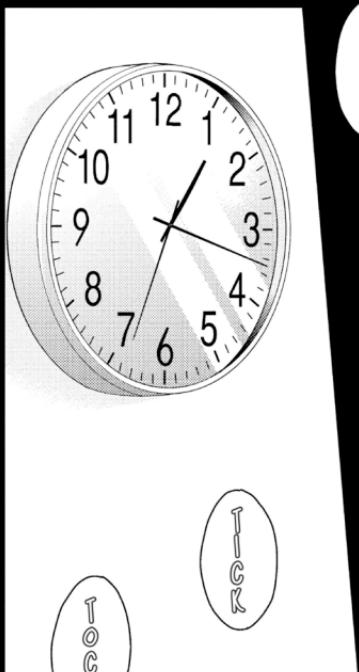
Work
hard,
Nobara

...

...for
me.

Partner.

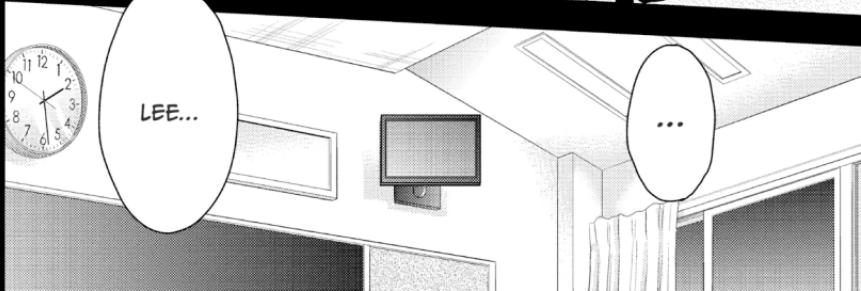




TICK

TOCK

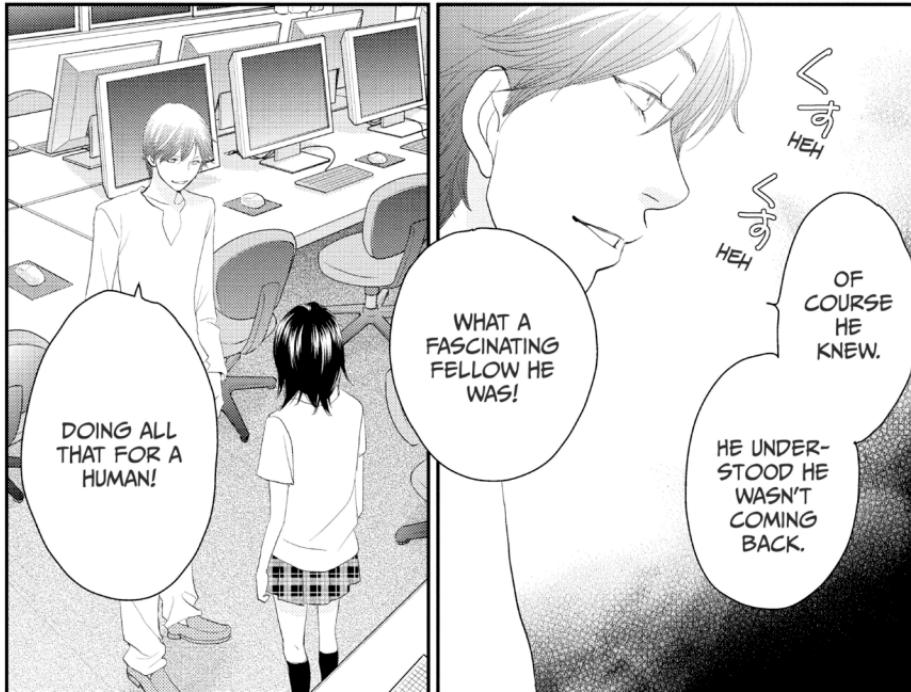
TOCK

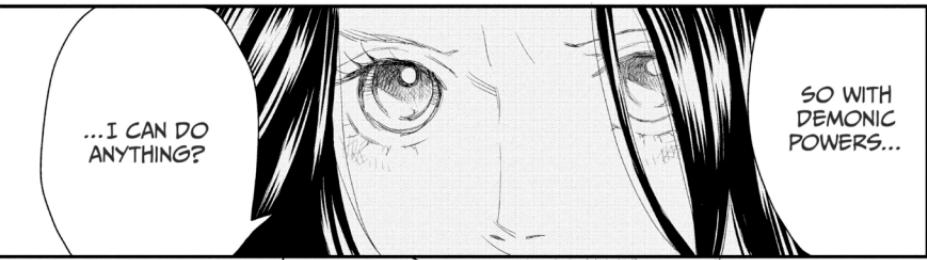






NOW THAT
YOUR DEMON
IS GONE, YOU
CAN RETURN
TO NORMAL
LIFE AGAIN.







I'LL DO
WHATEVER
YOU WANT!

THEN BRING
LUCIO BACK
TO LIFE!



WELL?

EVEN IF I
HAVE TO
BECOME A
DEMON.

GET ON
WITH IT!



OR ARE YOU
JUST GONNA
STAND THERE
SMIRKING?

SO FIND
A WAY!

SHING!

SHING





WITH
DEMONIC
POWERS...

VERY
WELL.

...CREATING
A VESSEL
FOR A SOUL
IS A SIMPLE
MATTER.

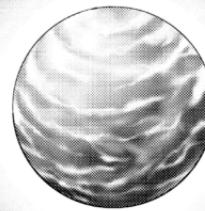


HOW
ABOUT...

...I GIVE
YOU A
LITTLE
TEST.



PRESENT
ME WITH
100 ORBS.



...AND DAY-
BREAK...

BETWEEN
NOW...

The most
I've ever
made in one
day is ten.

WHAT'S
WRONG
?

NOW,
SHOULD
YOU FAIL...

I...

I'LL DO
IT!

One...

... hundred...

Wait for
me...

...Lucio.



Next
time, I'll
be the
one...

...
welcoming
you home.

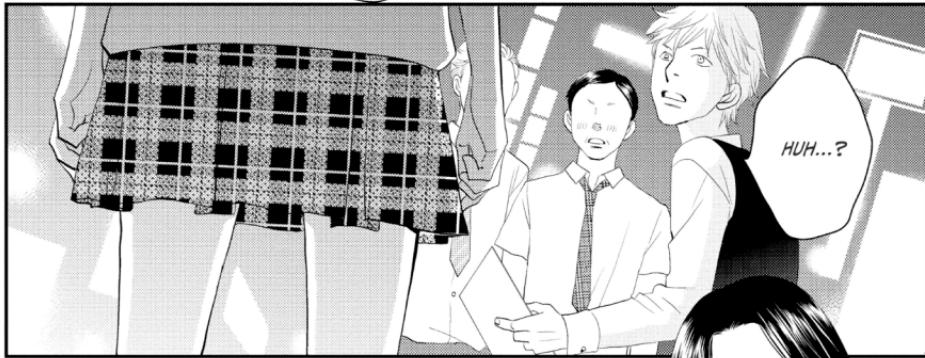


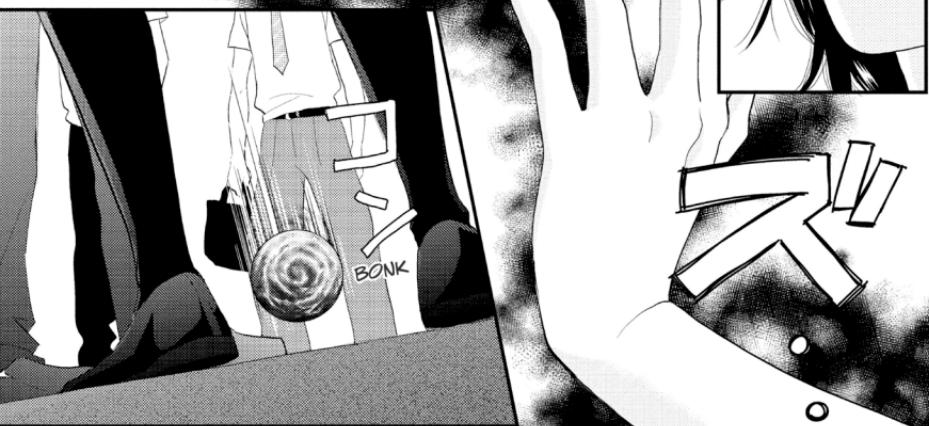
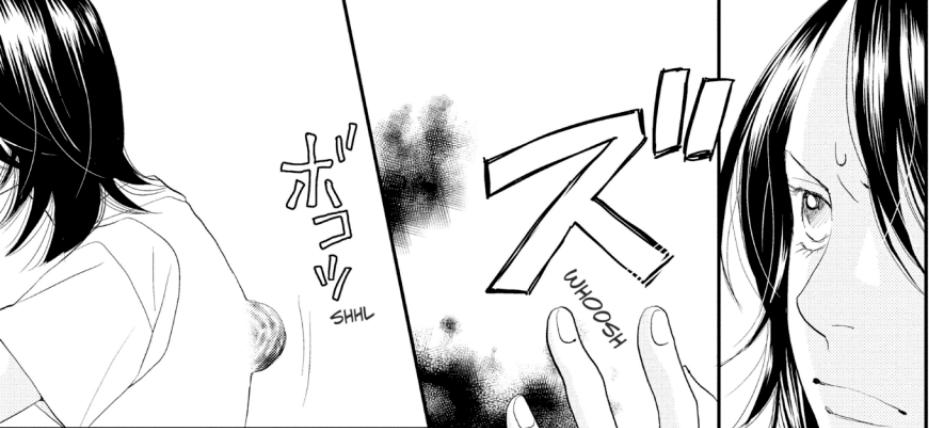
case
II

しばらの
元

CROWN
OF
THORNS







...and it's
getting
hard to
find people.

It's past
two in the
morning...

I've never
done
anywhere
near 100
before.

And what
he told me
after...

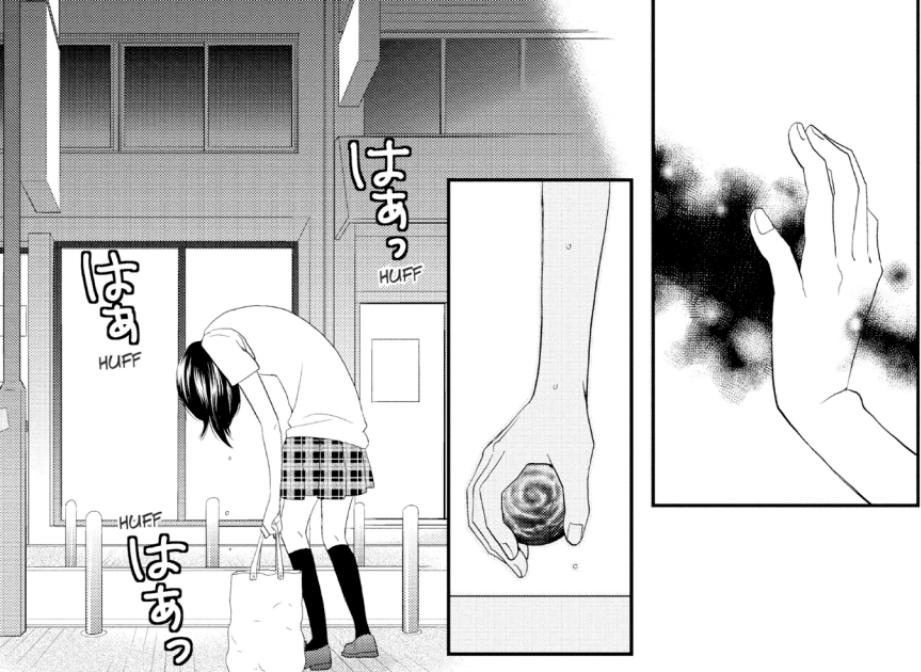
Will I even
be able to
find enough
negative
emotions to
filter?

BECAUSE YOUR
SERVICE TO A
DEMON IS THE
REASON YOU
EVEN HAVE THAT
POWER.

WHY BY
DAYBREAK,
YOU ASK?

...YOUR
ABILITY TO
FILTER DARK
EMOTIONS INTO
ORB'S WON'T
LAST TILL
MORNING.

NOW THAT
YOUR
DEMON IS
GONE...



DO YOU
HAVE A CELL
PHONE,
NOBARA?



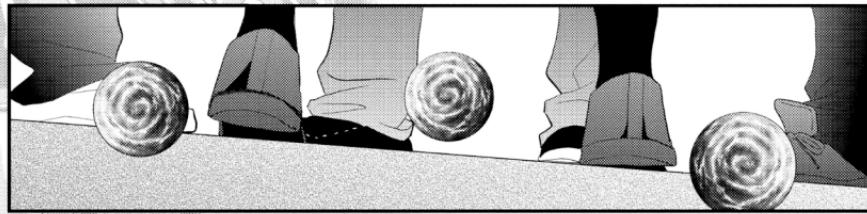
LUCIO...

HE...
VANISHED.



But I won't
accept
that he's
gone.





... through
your body
to make
orbs...

That's
right...

Filtering
negative
emotions...

That's
what Lucio
disappeared
to protect
me from.

That's
what
turned
Henmi
into a
demon.

Ninety-
nine?
さあやう
う?
う?

HUH?

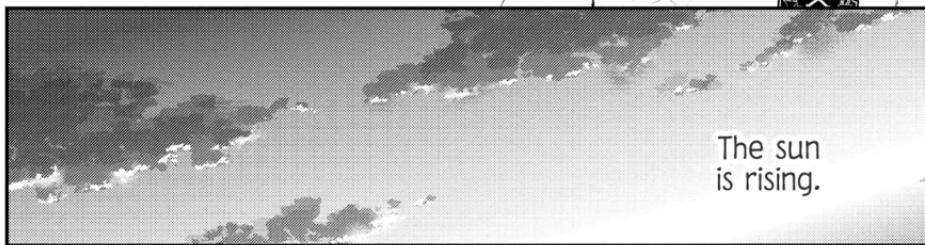
WHAT
IS SHE
BABBLING
ABOUT?

LET'S
TAKE HER
BACK TO
SHINJI'S
PLACE.

STEADY
NOW, ON
YOUR
FEET.

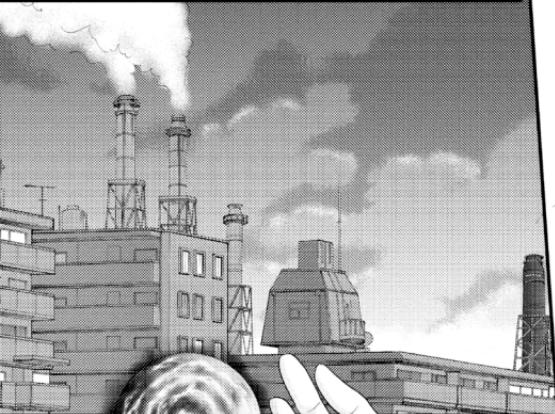
NINETY-
NINE...





Some
of the
filtered
smoke's
still inside
me...







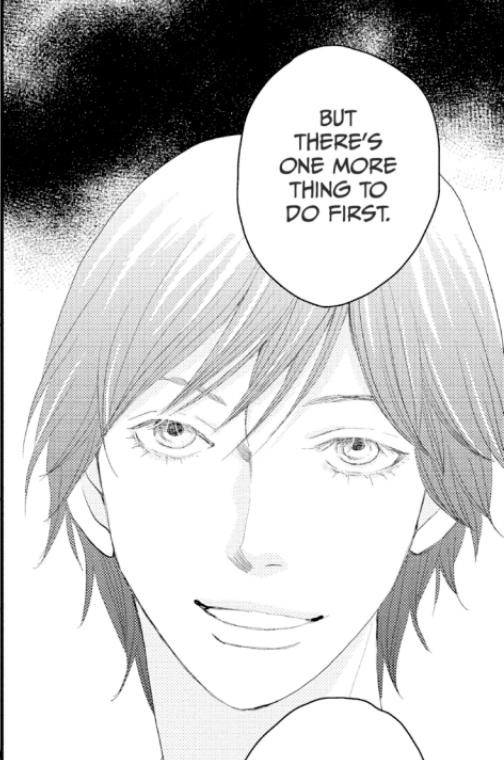






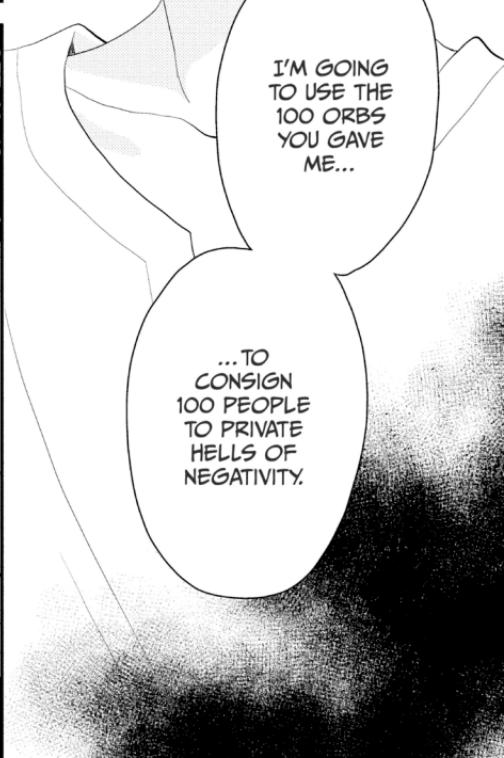


BUT
THERE'S
ONE MORE
THING TO
DO FIRST.



...I'LL
RESUR-
RECT
HIM FOR
YOU.

AND
ONCE
THAT'S
DONE...



I'M GOING
TO USE THE
100 ORBS
YOU GAVE
ME...

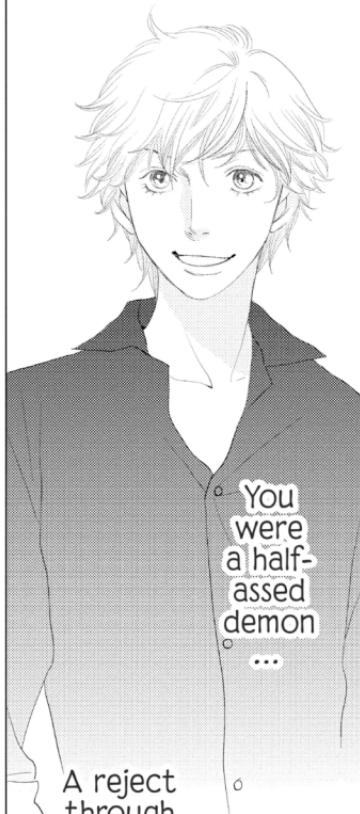
...TO
CONSIGN
100 PEOPLE
TO PRIVATE
HELLS OF
NEGATIVITY.



YOU'RE LYING...



You were
a demon,
but you
were
nothing
like him.

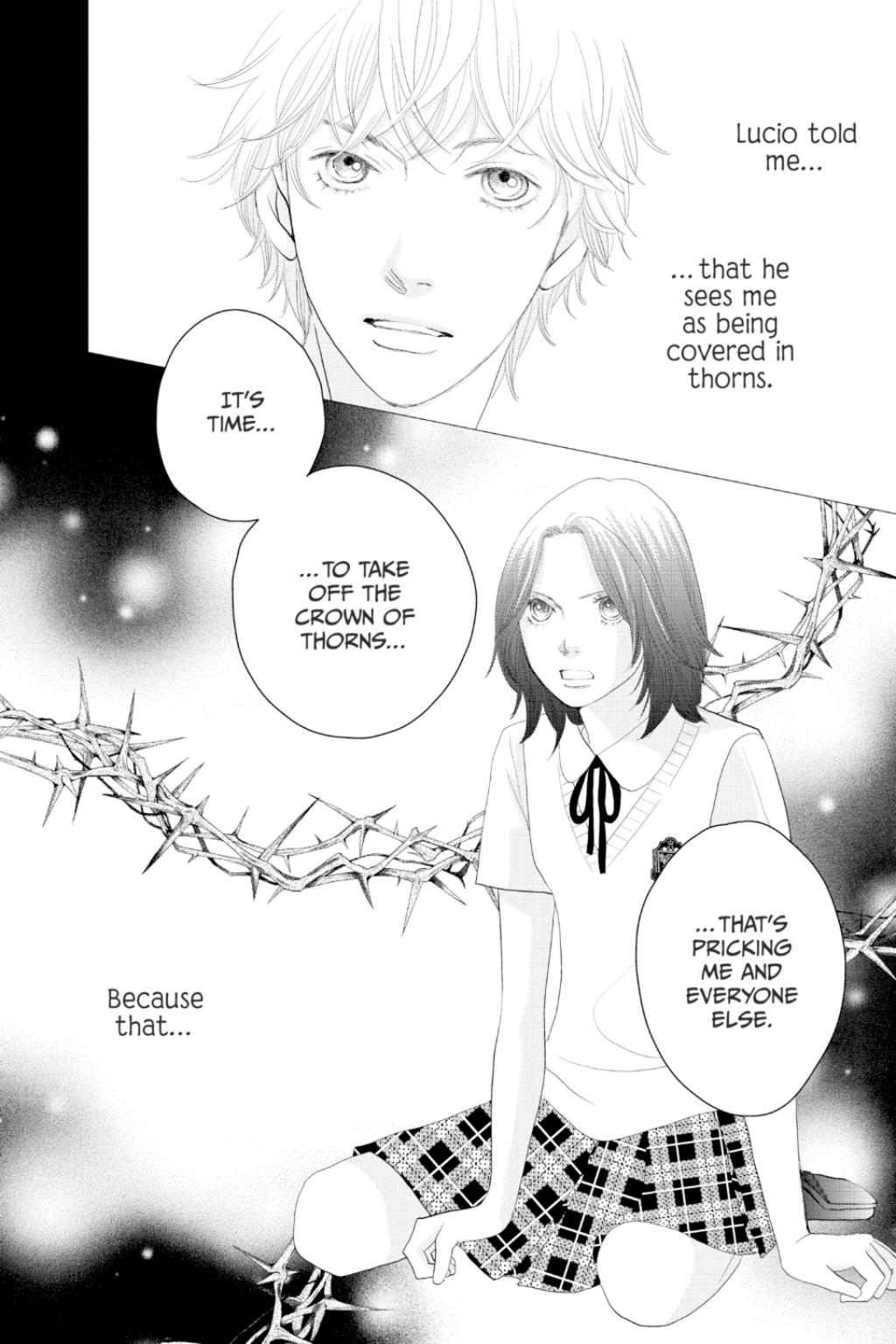


Lucio...

He's
loving
this.







Lucio told
me...

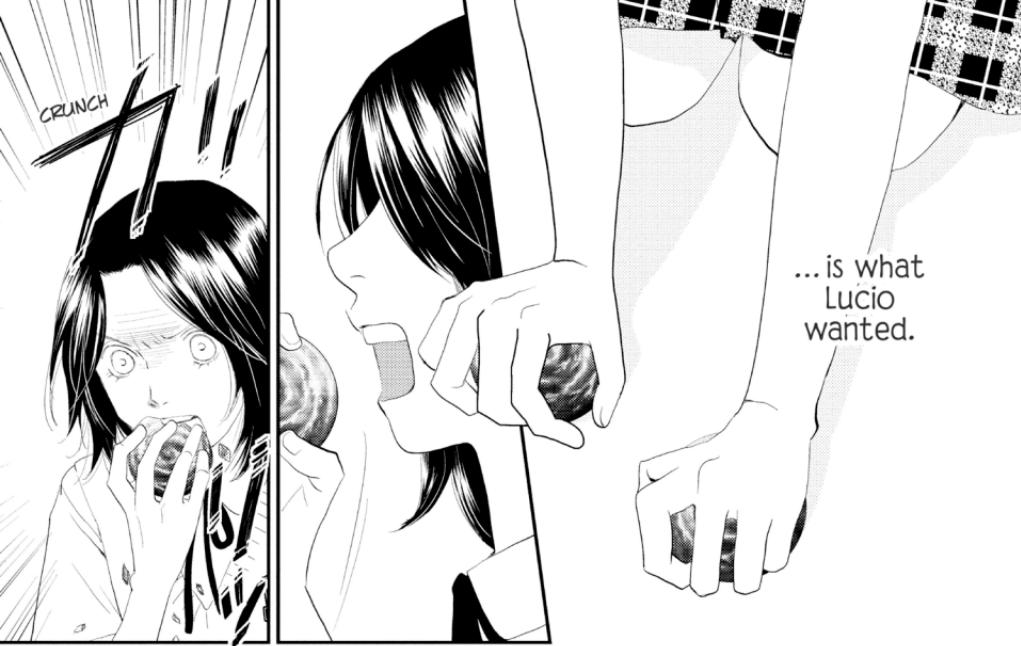
... that he
sees me
as being
covered in
thorns.

IT'S
TIME...

...TO TAKE
OFF THE
CROWN OF
THORNS...

Because
that...

... THAT'S
PRICKING
ME AND
EVERYONE
ELSE.



THESE
ORBS
AREN'T
GOING
TO HURT
ANYONE.

I'M
TAKING
THEM ALL
BACK.

STOP.

I
ASSURE
YOU, IT
WON'T!

DOING
THIS
WON'T
MAKE YOU
INTO A
DEMON!

YOU'RE
GOING
TO MAKE
YOURSELF
SICK.

THERE'S
NO POINT
SACRIFICING
YOURSELF!

STOP!

CRUSH

I'M
GOING TO
SAVE 100
PEOPLE.

AND
IT'S ALL
THANKS
TO YOU.

AS

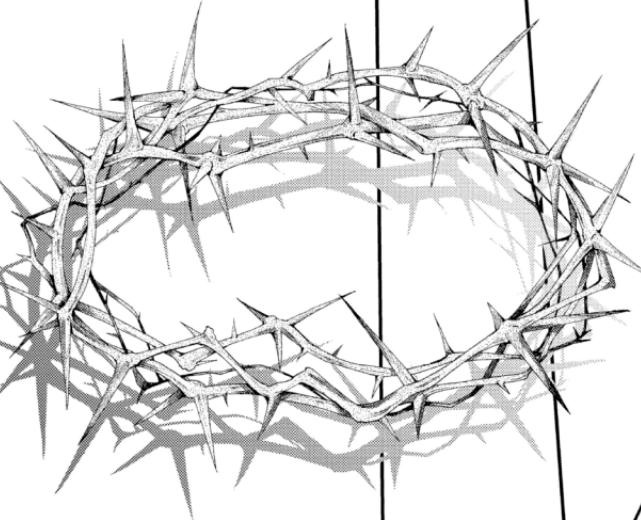
A DEMON,
HOW MUCH
DOES THIS
GOOD DEED
DISGUST
YOU?

CRUSH

CRUSH

Never...

I HOPE
YOU NEVER
FORGET
THIS.



I will never
wear my
crown of
thorns
again.

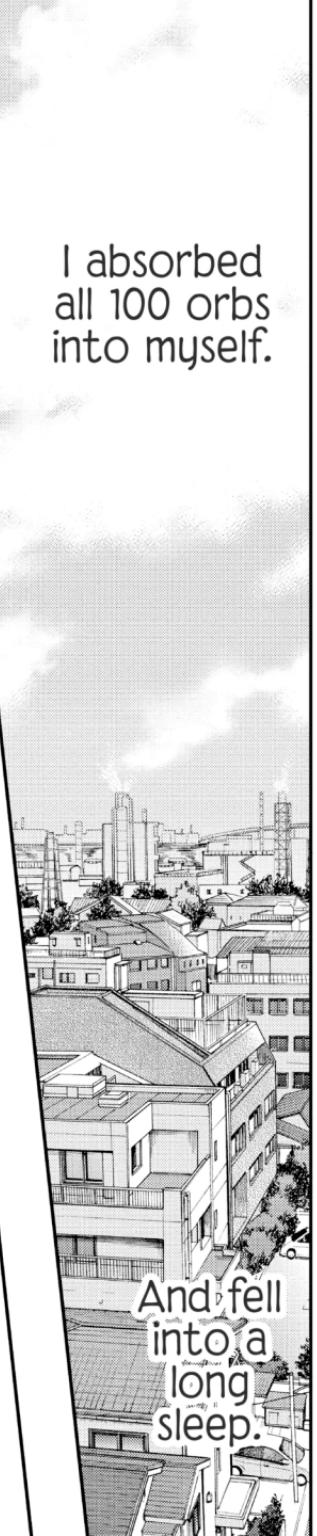
STOP!





I absorbed
all 100 orbs
into myself.

Later
theu
told
me...



And fell
into a
long
sleep.

...that
next
to my
body...

...they
found a
barely
used cell
phone...

...with a
picture of
a smiling
Lucio...

...that wasn't
supposed
to exist
anymore.



いはうの 冠

CROWN
OF
THORNS

Last
case

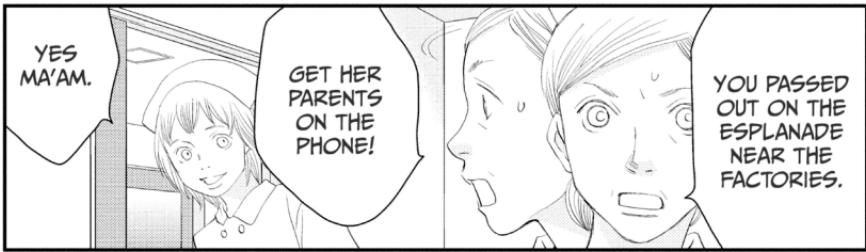


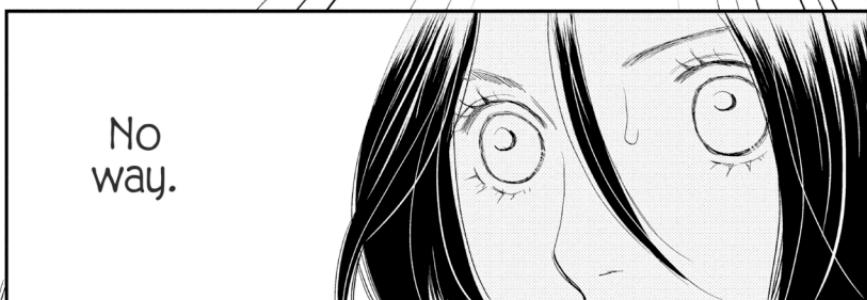
SHE'S
AWAKE?

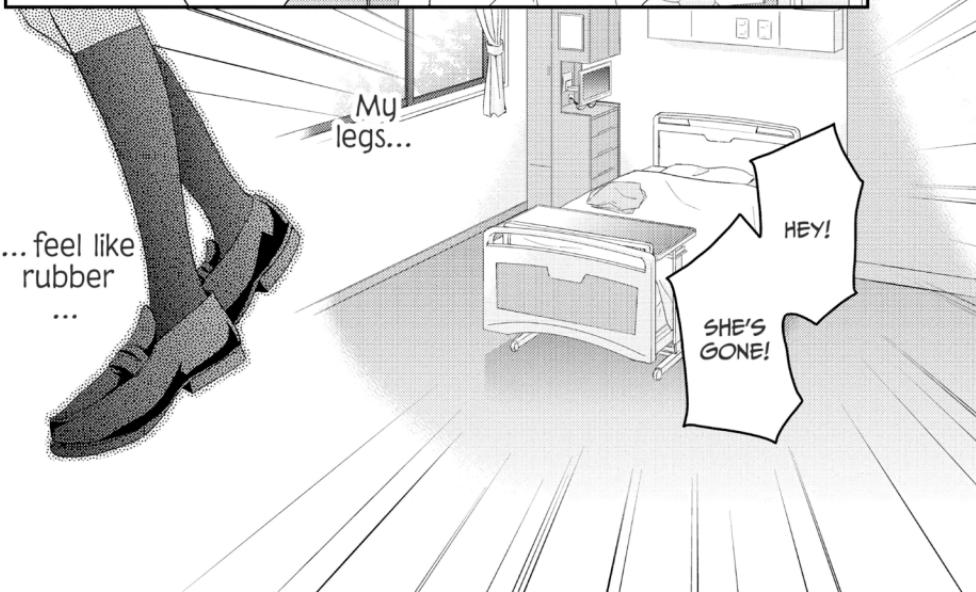
MS.
FUKAMI.

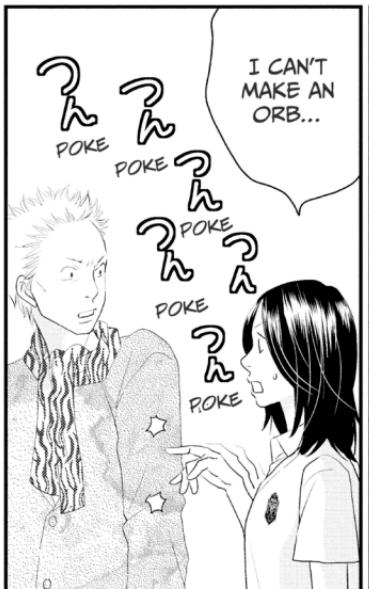
MS.
NOBARA
FUKAMI!

CAN YOU
HEAR
ME?



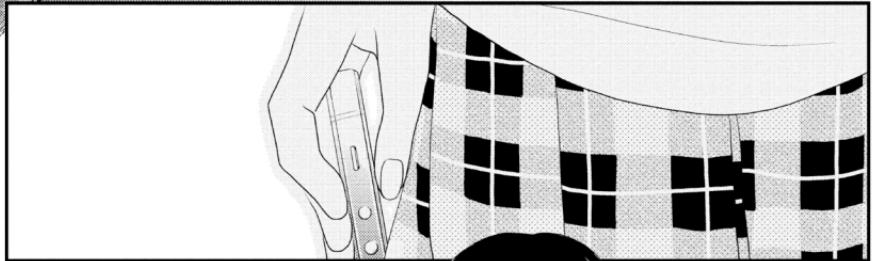














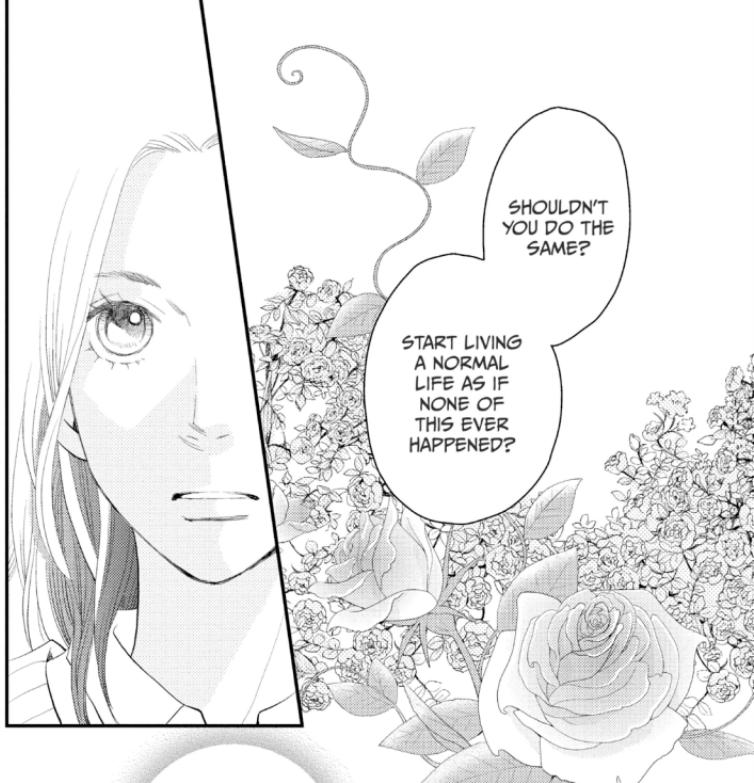




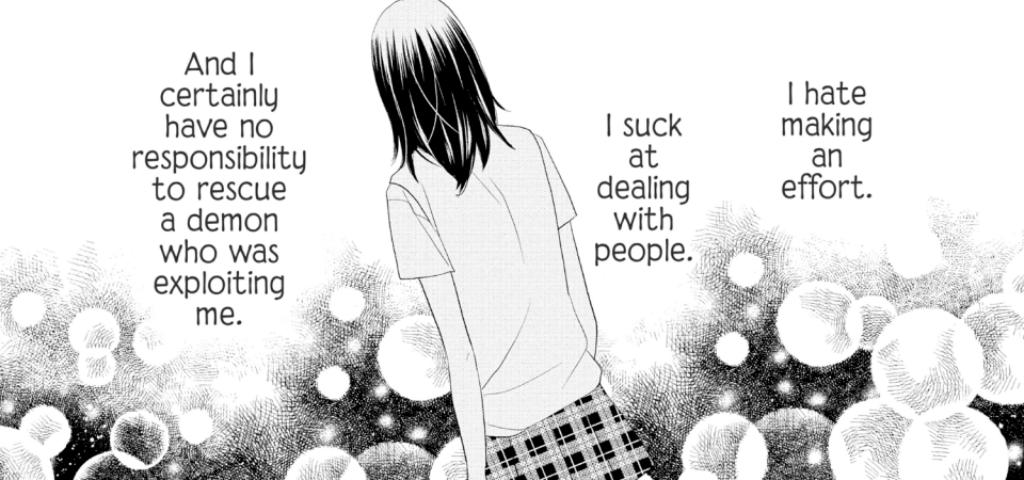


He's not...

...wrong.



The old me would have done just that.



And I certainly have no responsibility to rescue a demon who was exploiting me.

I suck at dealing with people.

I hate making an effort.



WHAT
CAN I
SAY?

I REALLY
WANT TO
SEE HIM.

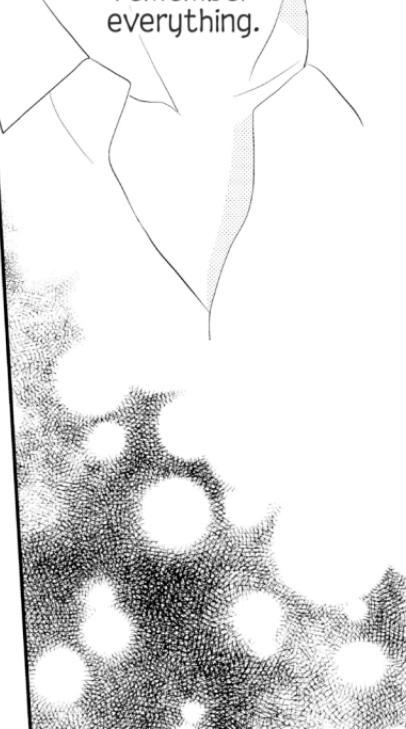
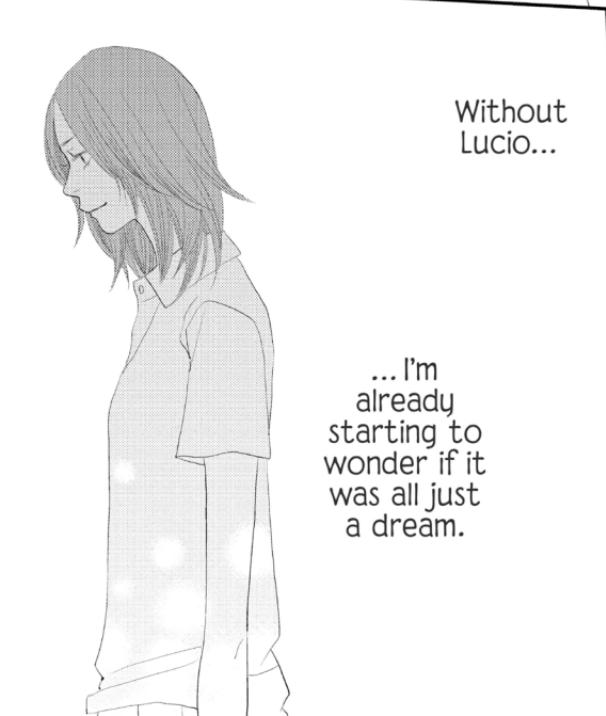
I just
want
to look
into the
eyes...



... of my
slightly
virtuous
demon.

It's
okay.

Even if
Lucio has
forgotten
all this...

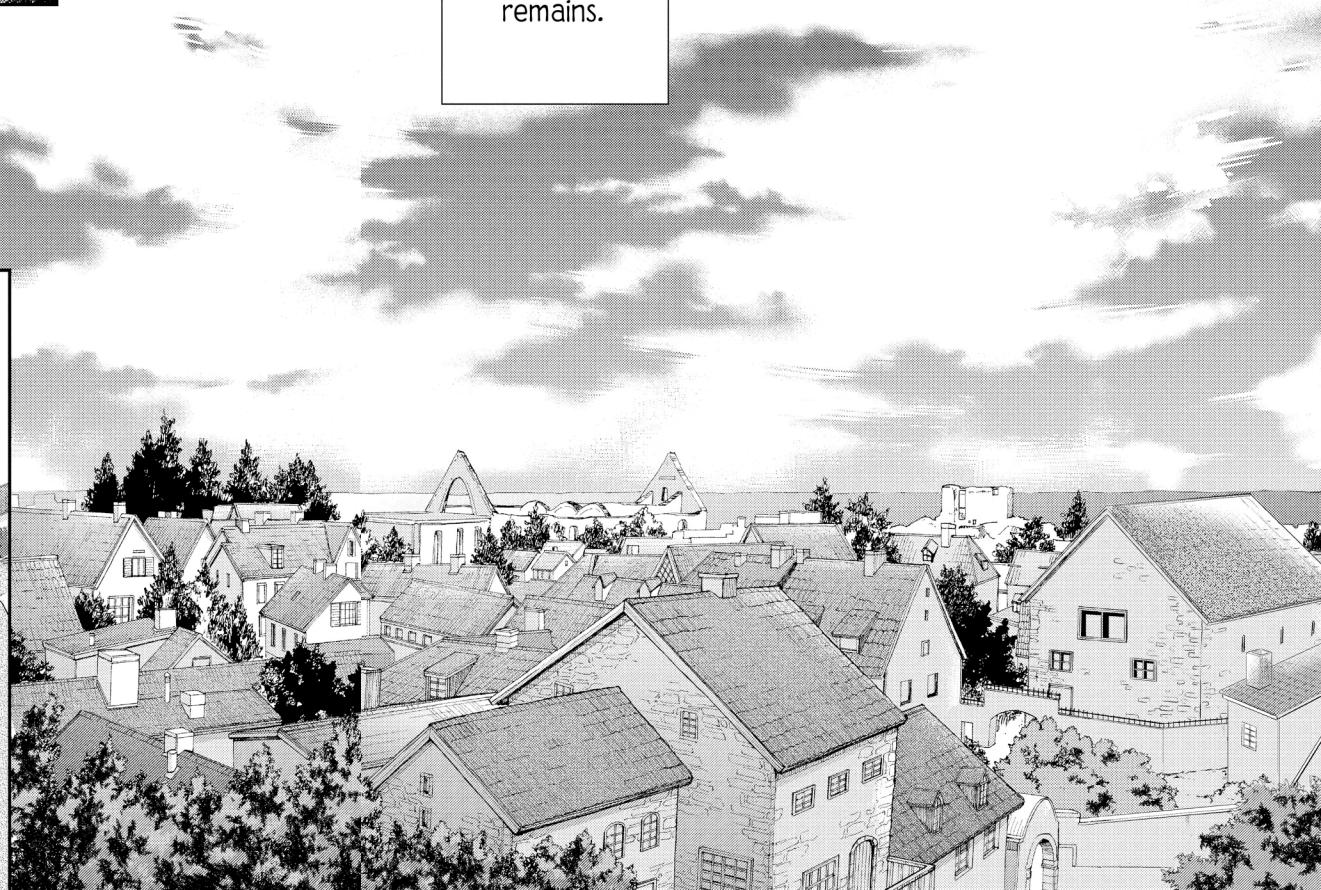


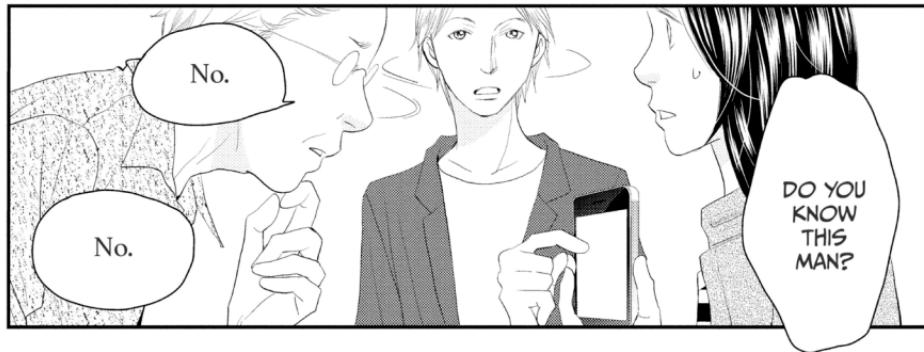


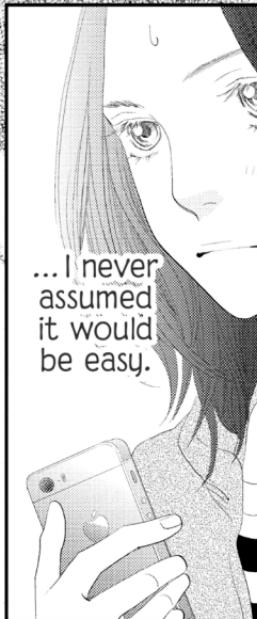
But...

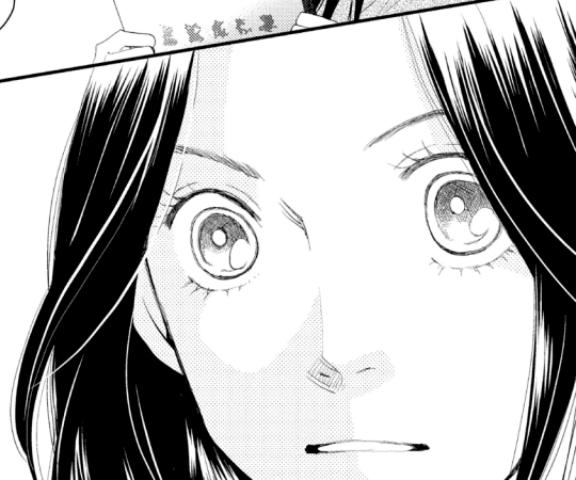
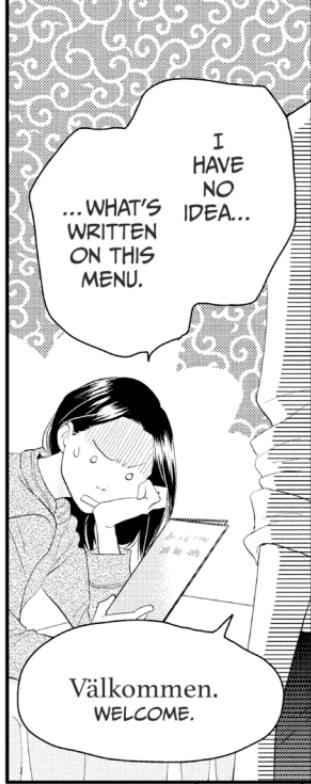
... that
warm
feeling
still
remains.

... in my
heart...



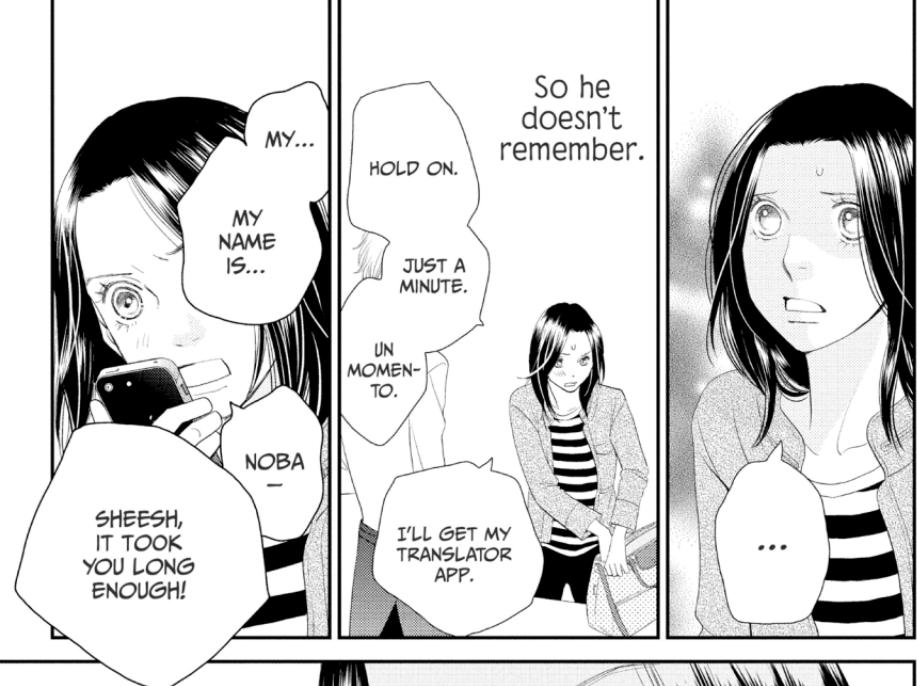














I CAN'T
LEAVE HERE
WITHOUT A
PASSPORT...

I DON'T
HAVE ANY
MONEY, I
GET HUNGRY
ALL THE
TIME...

I
CAN'T
FLY
ANYMORE
...

I
CAN'T
STOP
TIME...

BEING
HUMAN...

...IS A
TOTAL
PAIN
IN THE
ASS!







It's a day
like every
day, full of
wishes.



Make
sure you
don't
wish too
hard.

But be
careful

...

I WANT
TO GET
MARRIED.

THERE
HAS TO BE
SOMETHING
BETTER
THAN THIS.

I
WISH SHE
LOVED ME
BACK.

BE A
WINNER,
LOTTERY
TICKET!

I WISH
MY DOG
WOULD
COME
HOME.

I WANT
TO COME
IN FIRST IN
THAT RACE!

IF ONLY
I WAS
PRETTIER
...

I HOPE
GRANDPA
GETS
BETTER.

I WISH HE'D
DUMP HER
ALREADY.

I NEED
TO
PASS
THAT
TEST.

IF ONLY I
COULD DO
SOMETHING
ABOUT MY
BOSS.

I
GOTTA
LOSE
WEIGHT !

I WISH
I WAS
BETTER
AT THE
PIANO.

I NEED
A
BETTER
JOB.

I WISH
I DIDN'T
HAVE TO
GO TO
SCHOOL.



Because
somewhere,
a demon
might be
listening.

The End

BONUS
MANGA

WHEN A HERO CALLS

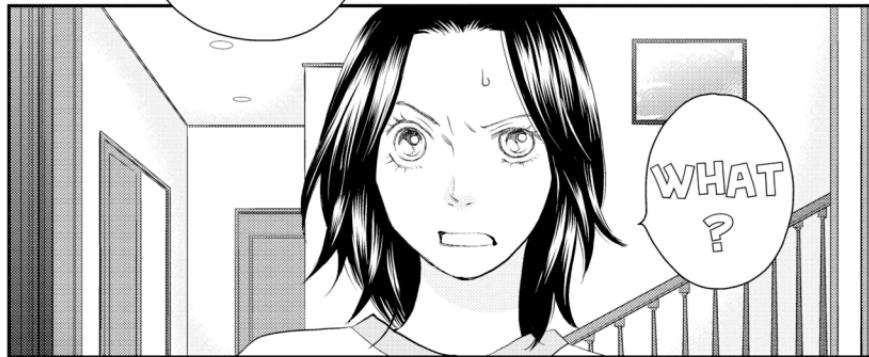
I'M A
HERO.

AND I'VE
HEARD
THERE'S A
DEMON IN
THE AREA.

SO I'VE
COME TO
VANQUISH
IT!

OH!

HELLO
THERE!

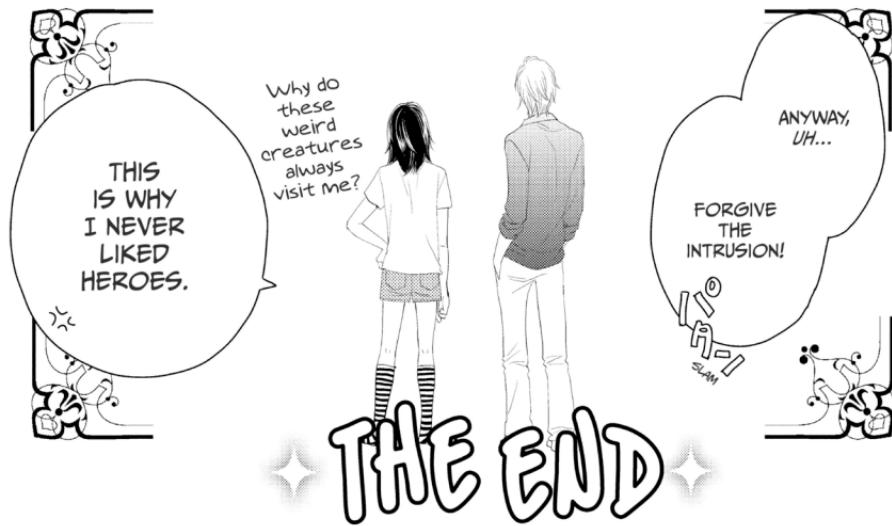
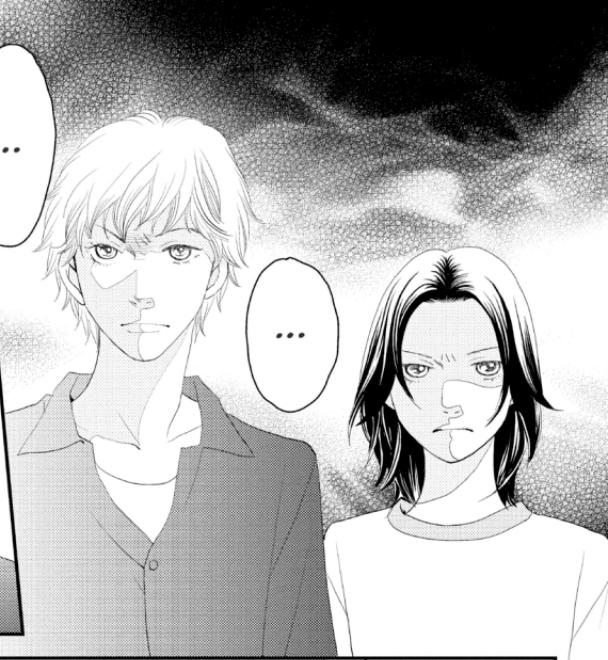












@ AFTERWORD @

That other
shoujo
manga
had
zombies
covered...

I've wanted
to write
a demon
manga for
a long time
now.

A demon should
have horns and
bat-like wings
and fangs and
a deep, gravelly
voice...

Brain-
storming

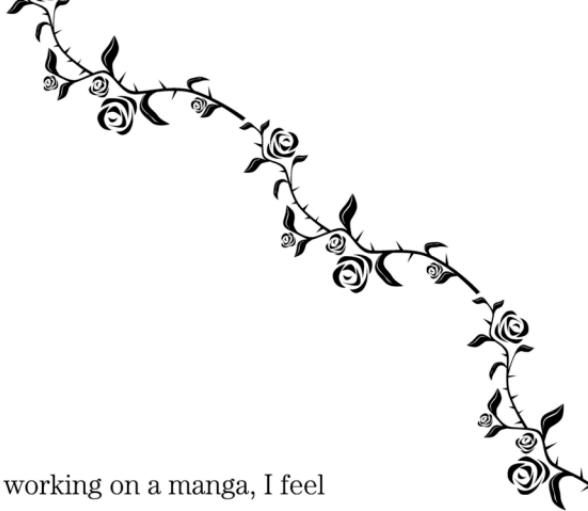
I've loved
zombie- and
demon-themed
horror movies
since I was a
child.

BWAHAHAHAHA!
I'M A DEMON
AND I OWN
THY SOUL!

Yikes.
She
almost
made
me into
that...!

THAT'S
AWFUL
!

THANKS FOR READING
UNTIL THE END!
—KAMIO



Whenever I'm working on a manga, I feel an intense urge to travel. And then when I finish...for some reason I never end up going anywhere. Maybe that's why so many of my characters go on trips—they're acting as proxies for their homebody creator?

YOKO KAMIO

Yoko Kamio made her manga debut in 1986 with *HATACHINO MAMADE MATTEIRU* (Waiting Until 20). Her works since include *SUKI SUKI DAISUKI* (I Really, Really Like You), and *MARY-SAN NO HITSUJI* (Mary's Lamb). Following its release, *HANA YORI DANGO* (Boys Over Flowers) broke sales records by becoming the first shojo manga series to sell over 61 million copies in Japan, making the series the best-selling shojo manga in Japan. The series went on to win the 1996 Shogakukan Comic Award in the Girls Preferred Division.

Crown of Thorns

VOLUME 2
SHOJO BEAT EDITION

STORY AND ART BY
Yoko Kamio

ENGLISH TRANSLATION & ADAPTATION **Casey Loe**
TOUCH-UP ART & LETTERING **Evan Waldinger**
DESIGN **Shawn Carrico**
EDITOR **Pancha Diaz**

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